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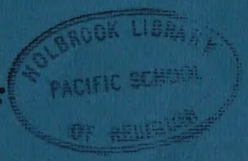

NEW PATTERNS OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL WITNESS

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CONFERENCE FINDINGS

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EDITORIAL

The End of the Vasco da Gama Era

The Churches are faced with a new situation in Asia today. This situation has been described in various ways. Following K. M. Panikkar, the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches calls it post-Gama age. Dr. Vissert' Hooft says: "The Vasco da Gama period in Asia is over, but we have still to count with its aftermath".[1] The new setting has various features. Some may be mentioned. For the first time since Vasco da Gama the Christian community in Asia is without the patronage of a ruling power. Western science and technology are no doubt spreading fast. But Western culture does not show the same self-confidence which it did in the heyday of its expansion. Indeed, the Christian Missions today have to face the ancient religions and indigenous cultures which are coming to a new sense of self-hood and universal missionary vocation. Further, in the 19th century, Christian Missions were pioneers in educational, medical and other social services. Today in every country of Asia, the national community itself has become alive to the social rights and needs of the people and the State as the organ of the nation has been invested with the primary responsibility in several fields of welfare.

In this new setting, the Christian Church has become conscious of the need to evaluate its own position and to re-order its life as a "minority" set in the midst of a majority, generally indifferent to her existence and hostile to its mission.

A Style of Minority Living

What should be the style of Christian living in Asia today? Masao Takenaka of Japan speaks[2] of the temptations facing the Christian minority in Asia to pursue the paths either of isolation or of adaptation. These temptations are to be resisted. Takenaka

[1] *Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XI, No. 4, July 1959, p. 371.

[2] "A Style of Creative Minority" in *Church Labour Letter*, No. 60, December 1959. Dr. Takenaka is Professor of Christian Ethics, Doshisha University, Kyoto, Japan.

wants the Church to follow the third path, namely, of developing "a style of creative minority". The phrase "creative minority" has been popularised by Arnold Toynbee who is no stranger to India. Takenaka poses the crucial question for the Christian minority in Asia today thus: "While maintaining its uniqueness in relation to the world, how can it take part in worldly affairs as a creative minority?" And he goes on to indicate "some of the moods" of the Christian creative minority as follows: *Firstly*, Christians should "share the burden of contemporary men", Puritanism with its emphasis on personal piety, and Christian idealism with its appeal of easy Christianisation of society are both out of date in the complexities and anxieties of an industrial society in mid-twentieth century. In the modern world, Christians are called to, what Ellul in *The Presence of the Kingdom* calls, "an agonistic way of life". The Cross and the Resurrection of Christ give Christians a sustaining source of power to participate in the agonies of modern power and not surrender to a fatalistic pessimism or an idealistic optimism. *Secondly*, the Church should be "a community of *diakonia* to the world". The decisive difference between the Church and other social organisations is that "the Church fulfils her task by losing herself" in service. *Thirdly*, today, major decisions which affect the human person are taken within the process of interaction of organised groups; therefore Christian service must involve Christian involvement in collective action to bring about greater justice to men. *Fourthly*, we must consider the local congregation as the Church's base of operation for her creative participation in the world. The form of the local congregation needs re-thinking in the light of the Church's mission and service. He says: "Rather than concentrating our effort upon building expensive Churches and maintaining a paid full-time ministry in many poor areas, we must make an attempt to actualise an informal koinonia within a living social context". *Finally*, "the decisive mood of a creative minority is an attitude of eschatological hope". "Fear not, little flock, it is your father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

* * * *

Hans-Reudi Weber of the Department of the Laity in the World Council of Churches has already made his impress on the Churches of Asia. During his recent visit to Asia, he met leisurely

with several groups of laymen and clergy and helped them to consider afresh the ministry of the Church in the lay world. After this visit, he has written a profound article[3] dealing with "the nature and task of the Church in the Asian Church situation". The article has the significant title *A Mature Minority*. He speaks about five challenges which the present situation brings to "the Churches in Asia and through them to the Church Universal". And we quote the main conclusions:

1. *The Remnant Minority against the Stream.*—That we say "yes" to our minority situation; that we replace our majority-thinking by maturity-thinking; that we venture to be the Remnant whose only safeguard is God's grace and whose only *raison d'être* is its mission in, and service to, the world.

2. *The Mystery of the Dispersion of God's People.*—That we do not yield to the temptation of outer or inner emigration from our diaspora situation in the world; that we accept our vocation to be aliens, exiles and a pilgrim people; that this diaspora situation become for us a constant reminder of the fact that our Lord has not only called us out of the world to be with Him, but that He has also sent us out into the world to witness and serve with Him.

3. *The Cosmic Dimension of Christ's Victory.*—That our minority situation and perseverance in the diaspora must lead us to a deeper apprehension of the cosmic significance of Christ's victory. That we come to a deeper understanding of what the world is and therefore also what the Church is. That, in the light of this, our mission in God's world recovers the sense of urgency which characterised the life of the early Church. And that we recognise again our place at the focus of world history.[4]

4. *Dimension and Intention.*—That we see again the primary importance of the Christian dimension in the life of the Church and its members; that we recognise, therefore, the all-important need for local congregations and individual Christians to grow up into maturity; that, consequently, we examine the intentional

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[3] "A Mature Minority" in Laity (Bulletin 8 of the Department on the Laity and on the Co-operation of Men and Women in Church and Society). W.C.C.

[4] This conclusion is put in the form of a question in the article referred to.

activities of the Church and the work of set-apart ministers with the criterion—Do those activities help or hinder the growth of a mature Church whose whole life has such a specific dimension that it radiates spontaneity?

5. *The City and the Salt.*—That we restore the right balance in our two-fold calling to be the city and the salt (it is almost incurable that those who are professionally involved in the corporate life of the Church tend to forget or minimise the second!) That we re-examine the structures and patterns of our Church life and ask which of them hinder, and which of them foster the basic two-fold calling of the Church, discerning thereby what must die and what must constantly be renewed in the household of God.

* * * *

Kenneth Cragg, the Christian Scholar on Islam, is already known and appreciated in India through his books and his visit. He too has written on the pattern of creative living by the Christian minority. He has the Arab world specially in mind. He draws the following lessons from the New Testament about "the art of being a minority".[5] They are (1) "Transcending the victim-mentality, we should reach out hospitably and joyously into the majority world." (2) "This presupposes an inner intensification of life and devotion. The constant duty of the Christian minority is to be vigorous and assured by itself.....The ruling duty of any Christian towards any situation is to be in it authentically Christian". (3) "Alertness is imperative where prejudices abound..... Situations of prejudice are not Christianly handled merely by denying charges. There has to be also a sensitivity to why people nourish prejudices and a constructive openness to dispel their falsity and disarm their menace." (4) "There is also the duty to be active with the majority in common campaigns for social good." (5) "We must also refuse to capitulate to the political. There is more that matters in life than the political order knows or admits." (6) "Yet, finally, the claim of any minority must be in its quality of life and thought. So we return to the New

[5] The full text of this paper has been published in *Operation Reach* (March and April 1959, pp. 6–17) by the Near-East Christian Council Study Programme in Islam. Prof. Cragg is the Director of the Study Centre for Islamic Studies in Jerusalem.

Testament. 'It was not by any despa ring withdrawal from city and market that they conquered the world; not by any proud isolation or selfish security; not by any impatient violence; but by the winning influence of a gracious faith, they mastered the family, the school, the empire. . . . . ' Ye see your calling, brethren. "

Nasrapur Consultation

Creativity, Maturity and Integrity—In this day and age, these are the characteristics we are looking for in the Christian minority as it seeks to relate itself to the nation as its servant in the name of Christ. What does it mean concretely for the Indian Church in India today?

One aspect of this question was discussed at Nasrapur in January 1960 by the Consultation which met to consider the theme: *New Patterns of the Social Witness of the Church in India.*[6] Nasrapur 1960 concluded the study on social questions which has been going on in India since Bombay 1956 for four years under ecumenical inspiration. The study sought to stimulate discussion and develop a common Christian mind on some of the crucial political, economic, social and cultural problems of New India. The Nasrapur Consultation asked the question: What are the implications of this study for the life and service of the Church in our country? The Findings of the Consultation are published in this Bulletin. Nasrapur has not arrived anywhere. Yet it has started a process of rethinking. Where do we go from here?

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[6] See fuller report elsewhere in this issue.

IN THE WORLD TO TRANSFORM IT*

By Murray Rogers, *Kareli*

False Perspectives

This is a title which warms the cockles of any Christian heart! It encourages our occupational disease, which is to make ourselves the transformers of the world, the ones upon whom the world waits for its enlightenment, the only society that will in time, with sufficient religious fervour, spiritual impetus and financial backing undo the scandal of God's failure with creation.

Put as strongly as this you will object and deny any such conceited intentions of Christian people but let us be on our guard for I am not exaggerating as much as may be imagined. Some of the most dangerous idealists, men whose diagnosis of the world's and the Church's troubles allow but one answer—be it pacifism, or Moral Rearmament, or the Welfare State, or a "return to the Bible" or more spiritual conventions, or Apostolic Succession—are to be found among Christians. It is among us that utopians are still to be found who argue that "winning the world for Christ" solves every problem in the twinkling of an eye and only a few years back the slogan "Christ the Answer" was used with a frightening frequency in preparation for a World Youth Conference held in Kerala.

Closely allied to this easy way of quieting one's conscience, of imagining that intransigent problems may be quickly solved if only many more would listen to what we Christians have to say, is the "if only" tendency among us. "If only" there were more Christians in political life; "if only" more Christians would really put "love" into practice; "if only" more so-called Christians were good churchmen; "if only" we could discover the techniques of evangelism which fit the mid 20th century; "if only" more would take prayer seriously.

The Lordship of Christ implies an indicative attitude to the world, to ourselves and to society, not a conditional attitude. If something has to be different before the Christian man can witness to Christ's Lordship then there is something wanting in that Lordship. If the journey

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* A paper read at the Nasrapur Gonsultation, January 1960, which concluded the Bombay Follow-up Study of Social Questions. The theme of the Consultation was New Patterns of Social Witness of the Church in India. The Rev. C. M. Rogers belongs to the Jyotiniketan, Kareli, Dist. Bareilly, U.P., an experiment in community living.

in Christian responsibility cannot be begun from the spot where we stand today, the spot in which injustice, hunger, competition in armaments, power politics, are present realities, then the Gospel is not what we claim for it. The Jews whose ascription of praise runs "The Lord is King, the Lord was King, the Lord shall be King for ever and ever" saw this clearly. They placed first the present tense—"The Lord *is* King". It is His Kingship today—in the present—which makes us certain that He was King and that He shall be King. God Whose Name and Being and Character are I AM provides the tense in which men live when they are living in reality.

Another false assumption which very frequently advertises the fact that we Christians are often idolatrous is what I would call "transformation by addition"; economics plus Christ equals God's Will, or politics plus Christian theology equals God's Will, or sociology plus Christian insights equals God's purpose. Each of these are false equations. We are *not* called to add God to anything! God—with a capital G—cannot be added to anything for there is no-thing and no-body that exists apart from Him. This easy tendency to bring *in* Christian theology and Christian insights and the Christian Gospel to undergird a programme or ideology whose value we have decided upon on other grounds is properly called idolatry, the attempt to use God to provide greater efficacity to *our* plans and *our* hopes.

CHRIST'S WORLD

Having stated so briefly some false perspectives which are dangerously common among us I would try to become more positive. "In the world to transform it": yes, because the world belongs to Christ. The central message of the New Testament and of the Christian Faith is that God loved the world and reconciled it to Himself in Christ. This leaves no room for the picture we have grown used to of accepting the sphere of the Church and the sphere of the world. There are not two worlds but one, Christ's world, Christ's reconciled world.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his *Ethics* considers this "thinking in terms of two spheres" at some length. As he sees it Christian ethical thought —which includes our being of service in God's transformation of the world—has been blocked by "the colossal obstacle" of false thought at this point. It has become a largely unquestioned assumption that there is a conflict between two spheres, the one divine, holy, supernatural, Christian, and the other, worldly, natural, un-Christian. In these schemes of thought which are both Roman and Protestant—it is assumed that "there are realities which lie outside the reality that is in Christ. It follows that these realities are accessible by some way of their own, and otherwise than through Christ." We may put great

emphasis on the reality which is Christ, we may claim Him to be Lord and King but however much we do these things He remains a partial reality amid other realities.

Bonhoeffer adds: "So long as Christ and the world are conceived as two opposing and mutually repellent spheres, man will be left in the following dilemma: he abandons reality as a whole, and places himself in one or other of the two spheres. He seeks Christ without the world, or he seeks the world without Christ. In either case he is deceiving himself. Or else he tries to stand in both spaces at once (this applies to most of us, I suspect—C.M.R.) and thereby becomes the man of eternal conflict", the man of the endless problems and questions.

For us to exclude this "two sphere thinking" will take much re-thinking—a conversion in fact to belief in the totality of redemption in Christ. No longer—thanks to Good Friday and Easter—are there two sectors, God's sector and the Devil's sector, but one, God's world, the redeemed world, the reconciled world. The world, the one, total world, is in fellowship with God. There is no possibility of being a Christian outside the reality of the world and there is no possibility of existence in the world outside the reality of Jesus Christ. The world—the world of politics, economics, society—the entire life of men and what we describe as "things", whether it recognises it or not, is solely and entirely the world of Christ.

The Church therefore as being that part of the whole world which recognises what the total world is in Christ, proclaims this reign of Christ, states in act and word that the world has been transformed and is daily being transformed by God in Christ. He is the transformer, not the Church; He reconciles, not the Church. The whole world is to be called to its one and only reality, Christ. As F. D. Maurice said in a Christmas sermon in 1892 (quoted by A. R. Vidler in his "Essays in Liberality"): "the Church.... is a witness to all mankind of what God has done for them, and what they really are, created in Christ, and redeemed by Christ, and capable but for their disbelieving this truth, and not taking their position as members of his body, of showing forth his character and his glory."

Some Implications

This being the Christian Faith, the Biblical world view, there follow certain implications some of which I find are to the forefront in my own mind.

1. First, our word and deed to the world in which we live is "Yes", the "yes" of responsibility for the world. Whenever you and I, Christians, stand apart from the world, withholding our "yes",

our acceptance of a living relationship with the world, then we stand apart from Christ for, as has been said, " it is only in the midst of the world that Christ is Christ " (D. Bonhoeffer's *Ethics*, p. 71).

As I consider the part of the Church to which I belong I would say that many of our basic presuppositions about God and man and the world leave little room for a fundamental " yes " to each. The organisation of our parish life, of much of our social life in mission compounds, of our finances, of our institutions and forms of relief and scholarship, point to an underlying conviction that we will have as few dealings with our neighbour, our nation and the world as is compatible with our being able to live in peace and moderate security within the walls of the Church.

" In the world to accept it " comes before " in the world to transform it". This is where recent discussion about holy worldliness and religionless Christianity comes in. So frequently we Christians are like children standing on the seashore. Our toes feel the chilly water and perhaps we advance inch by inch into the water but the pull of the dry land is very strong. The " yes " which belongs to the Christian man is a plunge in, the invigoration and enjoyment of being up to the neck, of finding that swimming out of one's depth is a possibility. All of which is a parable.

2. Secondly, how are we to meet the other man, our neighbour ? How are we to meet tomorrow's situation—be it the political or economic situation ? We can choose one of two ways. Either we can meet him (or it) as an opposing factor to ourselves, a man to be changed by us, a man to be brought to God by us, a man to be converted and transformed by us, or we can meet him as a blood-brother—the blood being Christ's—another who has been redeemed by God, re-created by Him, transformed by Him.

One would expect the Church and Christians to be very much at home in every situation, in every culture, in every social group, for we are, in Christ related to that situation and to that culture and to that social group before ever we arrive. There can be nowhere where we are foreign and where we are " fish out of water". " All things are yours and you are Christ's and Christ is God's " is our introduction to any person or situation that confronts us any day and anywhere.

3. As it is Christ to whom the world belongs, and as it is only in Christ that the world can know what it is, then it becomes a major tragedy if we attempt to reserve Christ for the Church and give the world something less. This, I believe, is precisely what we often do.

We present the world with an endless list of what " men *ought* to do ", a list of obligations, of " good " advice in which they find no freedom and no joy for indeed there is no joy in being turned into a Pharisee. We are not called as individuals or as citizens or as organised churches to enforce the Ten Commandments, nor as George F. Kennan has said, are there " any grounds for asking our non-Christian fellow citizens to join us in making our common state into a vehicle of exclusively Christian purposes".

We frequently spend much time in attempting to foist a legalism upon the society in which we live because in fact we have turned the Christian Gospel into a new legalism. This accounts maybe for the fact that the fathers-in-God of the Church in these days spend so much time in discussing the discipline of the laity or new Canons and rules under which they will no doubt try to make men live. The ideal Christian man for very many has become the " Christian Pharisee "—if there is such a person—with all the moral earnestness and unpleasant uprightness and arrogance which go with every type of Pharisee, Christian, Jew, Hindu or atheist.

Christians are not in their societies or their nations to tell others what they ought to do *vis-a-vis* a particular political situation or a specific economic problem. Christians have no qualifications *ipso facto* which justify them in laying obligations on others. Christians are, on the other hand, present in every place to re-create Christ rather than to repeat His teaching, to experience Christ rather than to offer exalted moral exhortation, to tremble in the right attitude rather than to provide right answers.

What was said earlier about the impossibility of adding God to any situation—the equation " something plus Christ " always being false—holds good also at this point. A Christian is not a man plus Christ, as if he is what every man is plus a something which others have not got. He is a man. He knows both for himself and for others that the essential he, his being, his life, exists in Jesus Christ, his Lord, by whose forgiveness He lives the life of today as a bus-driver or as a theological professor. What he, the Christian, therefore has to give to the municipal board of which he is a member, or to the local trade union in the factory where he works, or on the school staff where he happens to teach, is not something that can be added to his avocation as a board member, a trade union man, or a teacher. It is his whole being in Christ which the neighbourhood or nation needs and not some " Christian " additions or moral rectitude which, strictly speaking, are neither Christian nor moral.

Transformation in the Depths

There is another facet of the subject before us which I wish to share with you and here, more than ever, I am out of my depth. Increasingly in recent months I sense something missing among us Christians but I hardly know how to express it. Is it that we hardly begin to grasp the tragic dimension of reality? There is a sense of the tragic, of the deep and immeasurable, which is beyond our awareness. The heights and the depths of human existence have been levelled, the mountains and the valleys have become to us a flat expanse. There is astigmatism in our vision which makes us see things, see life, flat.

For example, the full awfulness of death, its finality, is softened by easy and comforting ideas about immortality (which are neither Christian nor Biblical) and therefore the full force and grandeur of the resurrection is excluded to us. We neither sense the force of sorrow nor the force of joy. We so often speak as men who have never known what it is to be speechless before persons or before an event. We nurse a belief that God's blessing and the "right answers" lead straight to success—that God's answers allow of success stories only. Joy and comfort, getting on and success, seem to us to be on God's side while sorrow and pain and failure are, to us, arrayed against God.

The common ideal of a Christian community is one in which our needs are met, our questions are answered, a centre of peace and contentment where life is made more easy and more happy. The ideal type of a Christian service of worship therefore becomes one which ends with a handshake with the minister and the comment: "It was a very nice service." Whereas in truth the Church—where it senses the depths of God and of man's life—is a most disturbing community where things are not made easy but are understood to be infinitely more difficult. The Gospel is known to be most surely present precisely at the point of greatest failure, where sorrow is so deep that life is simply darkness.

We are a superficial, easy-going people for whom superficial and easy-going answers are enough. We do not cling to our questions. We ask a question and getting no immediate answer we forget the question and fail ever to find an answer. We are neither sensitive to the tragedies of the majority of mankind and by the same token we make ourselves impervious to the possibility of discovering the full power and magnificence of our calling in Christ.

Is the root of our shallowness in the fact that the word "God" has perilously little living content for most of us? "I will trust Him though He slay me"—"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of

the living God": these are not statements we could say with deep sincerity. We neither see how terrible and wonderful a thing it is to believe in God, nor how terrible and dreadful a thing it is to believe in no god. We know neither the fulness of belief nor the emptiness of unbelief. And here I am not speaking of feelings and sentiments but of how we "know" God and ourselves and the other man and that word "know" takes into itself our whole awareness of reality.

There is an understanding of human life in terms of tragedy which is far from Christian, it is the heritage of Greek antiquity. There is also a Christian awareness of the tragic and mysterious element in life without which we men are tempted to toy with the great realities of life. An ancient Roman author spoke of "lacrimæ rerum"—"the tears of things"—and a more recent author, Saint-Exupery, a Frenchman killed in the last World War, knew the same more deeply when he said: "c'est tellement mysterieux dans le pays des larmes"—"It is so deeply mysterious, the land of tears."

Without this awareness of God, most present in the terrible event, the awful personal tragedy, the shameful failure, the Gospel to which we witness will be, and too often is, a weak and pale palliative unable to grasp men in the depths of their beings. Then belief becomes opinion or idea; it ceases to be a driving passion, the very breath of life. Knowing so little of the awe men sense in the presence of God, of the silence which comes over a man when he becomes aware of the holy, the Gospel to which we witness fails to convince men that here is a gale of wind, an overwhelming passion which bursts into the middle of man's life.

So far as I can understand there are no easily available prescriptions which when followed automatically give a man this depth, this awareness of the overwhelming nature of God and of His whole creation. All I can say is that it is given to those for whom to live is to pray—though some such may not know they are praying, who know that worship is the one activity which matters above all else and who have a hunger for God and His presence which burns in them like an unquenchable fire.

Such men and women discern the closeness of sorrow to joy, of love to hate, of heaven to hell; they do not speak much of God but they know Him and they know therefore that He is there to be met and answered in every place of man's life. They know too that there are continents stretching beyond their thoughts, their words, their perceptions; they share with Hamlet in confessing: "The rest is silence." Such people whatever their work may be, however learned or unlearned they may be, transform the world in which they live and more often

than not they are ignorant of the fact that they are the agents of transformation.

Surprisingly much of what I wish to say on the subject of " In the world to transform it " is said with far deeper vision and with far greater awareness of the ultimate Reality present in each today by Boris Pasternak in his novel Doctor Zhivago. Here Yura is speaking of the Russian Revolution:

" Suppose you told someone to go and create a new world, to start a new era—they would ask you first to clear a space. ....But here, they don't bother with anything like that. 'Here it is. Take it or leave it.' This new thing, this marvel of history, this revelation is exploded right into the very thick of daily life without the slightest consideration for its course. It doesn't start at the beginning, it starts in the middle without any specified delays, simply on the first week-day that comes along, right in the middle of the rush hour. That's real genius. Only real greatness can be so misplaced and so untimely."

The explosion of the Father's Love into Bethlehem village and thus into the total life of man was as unexpected and misplaced. When men become vehicles of that same explosion the results are certainly not less surprising than the Russian Revolution was to Yura.

" Lord, I believe. Help Thou my unbelief."

THE PATTERN OF THE CHURCH'S FELLOWSHIP IN VIEW OF HER MINISTRY IN NEW INDIA*

By S. P. Appasamy, *Madras*

Introductory

The growth of the Christian Church in India has not been phenomenal during its history in the country, but there has been inspiring progress. At the same time the Church has been enabled to be of outstanding service to the country, both as a pioneer in social and educational service, and as the conscience of public opinion. Standards set in social welfare and in morals by the Church have become the national yardstick. Today, however, when the nation is being built anew, the Church in India needs to re-think and review its mission—its prophetic task—which includes the best strategy for winning India for Christ, the acting as leaven in the changes that are coming about as a preparation for the extension of the Kingdom of God.

The greater part of the expansion and service of the Church in the past was actually through the various 'missions' whose vision and enterprise were indeed commendable. The credit for many of these efforts must go to the foreign personnel who directed these efforts—though we look with pride on the achievements here and there of a Pandita Ramabai, a K. T. Paul or a V. S. Azariah. The missions were the spearhead, the Church followed. This pattern has placed a premium on the direction, dynamic and supervision of the ordained and often foreign ministry of the Church.

Today, the very vastness of the tasks and opportunities opened up in the re-building of Society calls not for the insight and vision of the few but for the full and conscious vision and participation of the many both in building the life of the Church itself and of its mission to the nation. At the same time, the role of the laity in the Church has received great impetus from studies through the World Council of Churches. We can no longer depend purely on the initiative of missionaries or ministers alone. Every Christian needs to share his knowledge, vision and effort to study as a Christian the situation in

* A paper read at the Nasrapur Consultation, January 1960, which concluded the Bombay Follow-up Study on Social Questions. The theme of the Consultation was New Patterns of Social Witness of the Church in India. Mr. Appasamy is Secretary for Literature and Religious Work on the staff of the National Y.M.C.A. of India.

which he is placed, to perceive the opportunities open to Christian enterprise, and to strain every nerve to bring that all-Christian effort to fruition. Thus only can the Christian truly be 'the salt' or 'the leaven' that he is called to be, under the direction of God.

It has been rightly pointed out that the Church must form the layman; and the layman must transform the world. If this is indeed to be the pattern of the future, we must first have a Church that will form the layman—through its worship, and through its fellowship. This task is that of the local Church and the local congregation. It is here that the power of the Spirit of Christ enters the world in order to transform the congregation first and, then through it, the community. This transformation coming through its sacramental corporate worship should build that oneness of fellowship in the daily discipline of the Christian life and of service to the non-Christians in the midst of whom it lives and moves and has its being.

A Truly Indian Church?

A Canadian theologian, John Webster Grant, who spent a year at the United Theological College in Bangalore, has written a very stimulating and thought-provoking book—*God's People in India*. In his introduction Grant says: "A visitor to the Indian Church is likely to come home with two strong and contrasting impressions. One is *wonder* at what God has been able to do with people whom no one had valued before. The other is *bewilderment* at the difficulty of transplanting Christianity from one environment in another in a way that will release new creative power." Discussing barriers in the way of the Church's effective witness and service to the Indian environment, Grant comments, "one such barrier was a foreign quality in much of the Church's practice that became immediately and depressingly evident to a visitor.... All over India one finds Christians who feel they must put on their Western manners when they go to Church.... One wonders how Hindus can be attracted to a religion that so stubbornly refuses to adapt itself to Indian customs, and one wonders how even Christians can be themselves in so alien a setting.... The first and most obvious need is that of imparting a more Indian character to the outlook and customs of the Church, while avoiding any dilution of the Gospel or any blunting of its moral demands." All this and more was said at Tambaram 20 years ago, the perceptive visitor finds the pace of change so slow after two decades.

While we are proud of Pandita Ramabai, Sadhu Sundar Singh and Narayan Vaman Tilak, we have far too few of such 'Indian' examples of Christianity. Indian organizations such as the N.M.S. and the I.M.S. started in this century cannot be said to have swept the

nation. Even the Ashram Movement, which has certainly grown and rendered significant service, has not greatly influenced the basic pattern of our 'non-Indian' Church. Christian experiments in Sarvodaya, Bhoodan, etc., have been considered as freaks and exceptions by our conservative Churches. The beautiful Dravidian Christian temple at Tirupattur, and the remarkable experiments in Christian yet Indian architecture at Medak, Dornakal, Erode and elsewhere have not found general acceptance or appreciation. Many churches still prefer translated Tamil hymns to Tamil lyrics, in spite of the rich stores of Tamil religious poetry available in the work of Vedanayaga Shastriar and H. A. Krishna Pillai. It does remain true that the 3rd and 4th generation Christian has lost touch with Indian music, proverbs, parables habits of thought, philosophy and social custom. While in the past we have been "called out" to be the people of God in India, we are now strangers in our own land.[1]

Our Isolation

It is apposite to remember that it was through its isolation from the world of other men that Israel failed in its mission to be 'the people of God'. Are we the 'people of God' in India in danger of failing Him in a similar way? Dr. J. W. Grant puts it this way: "It is often said that China conquered invaders by first submitting to them, and then completely absorbing them into the national life. The Indian way is different. India deals with foreign elements much as an oyster deals with a piece of grit. The invader is allowed to become a part of India, but he is prevented from contaminating the national life by a protective wall of social distance. China absorbs, India isolates. In its own way the Indian method is as effective as the Chinese, for new movements are hemmed in by an invisible barrier. New religions that enter India have a good chance of survival, but they often lose their ability to spread."

But the even greater danger to us as a community is that we like our isolation. We like it—and refuse to enlarge our frontiers. We know what a policy of containment did to the Syrian Christian Churches. As D. T. Niles says, the real danger to the Christian community is not syncretism but that it likes to live in a ghetto. Are we being isolated from the main stream of national life, or do we isolate ourselves from it, finding greater security in our separateness? Grant comments: "... communalism is responsible for some of the most serious weaknesses of the Indian Church. One of its great perils is that of becoming ingrown and self-centred. Since Christians are excluded from the

[1] Cf. *Ten Years Young*, C.L.S., 1957, pp. 11–13.

great Hindu Society outside, the Church necessarily becomes a self-contained community. Within it, the Christian must find scope for his ambitions and an outlet for his energies....Every human motive however worldly must find expression within its Fellowship....To an outsider one of the most disturbing features of the Indian Church is the preoccupation of its membership with status and prestige.... they grasp any opportunity to attain a dignity that is available to them nowhere else .... They must find within the Church the recognition and prominence many of us (Westerners) seek in politics, or business." And again " The greatest danger inherent in communalism is that the Church may come to think of itself as a natural society existing for the interests and ambitions of its members rather than as a supernatural society existing to do the will of God and to show forth His life before the world. Group solidarity threatens to replace divine mission as the bond of membership. The Church becomes a replica of the world rather than an outpost of the Kingdom of God."

" What is needed is a greater awareness of being not only a people, but God's people in India. The Church must live not by its natural vitality, but by the supernatural life of which it is meant to be the channel. The Indian Church must think of itself not only as a redeemed, but as a redeeming community, with talents not to be hoarded but to be risked. The Church must be a little more ready to die in order to live."

A Creative Minority

It would not be fair, however, to describe the Christian community only in terms of the general Indian conception of a communal group. The Christian minority has been a " creative minority " in the past, with an influence for good that far exceeded its microscopic size in the Indian population. But Toynbee, who developed this idea of the ' creative minority ' and sets out what such a group can achieve, also tells us of the fate of minorities which have ceased to be creative. There is a " nemesis of creativity ", to use Toynbee's phrase, and a rejection of the once creative minority. Can the Christian Church in India be described as a once creative minority with the consequent nemesis of creativity, so that we find ourselves being increasingly rejected by our fellow-countrymen ?

The creative minority can however recover its position through renewing its pioneering role in new spheres and orientating its effort to the changing situation. Is that not what we have been called upon to do ? One way of achieving this is by the formulation of a dynamic philosophy or theology relevant to the life of Society. If the Church is to serve India in a creative fashion, it must have a theological outlook

related to a changing India. Bishop S. Kulandran calls this the central issue of the Indian Church.

The part of this theology most necessary to the community itself relates to the Christian encounter with other faiths, as the Rev. George Appleton remarks.[2]

The "imperialism" of the West and the nationalisms aroused in reaction in the East have hitherto prevented a truly religious encounter. Now that the nationalisms of Asia are being satisfied by the achievement of independence and the assurance of its reality, and indigenous cultures are again being valued, Christianity and the other religions can at last meet and speak to one another on spiritual issues. Surely here we find a clue to what God may be doing.

In the past we have learnt what we know of the great religions almost entirely from Western scholars and Christian missionaries. Now, the books of exponents of the other faiths are being written in English, or translated, so that we can learn at first-hand what people of other religions believe. In the last resort, it is only people from within a religion who can finally tell us about its mind and heart. This apologetic is pressing us to listen and study, to understand the spiritual experience of other people.

We know much more than we did a generation ago of the lives of the founders of the other religions and of the creative influence they have had in the lives of their followers. The study of such great religious personalities as Zoroaster, Buddha and Muhammed is forcing Christians to review their traditional attitudes to other faiths and to ask if their conception of God-in-Christ is large enough to account for all true spiritual activity and all genuine religious experience. St. John and St. Paul were in no doubt, the former with his belief that Christ the Eternal Word was the true light "which lighteth every man," and the latter with his view of God's purpose "to sum up all things in Christ," all spiritual truths as well as all men. Is our interpretation of God's activity big enough to include His operations in other religions wherever there is truth, goodness and love, or is "our God" too small?

The Machinery

The parish system derives from rural society in mediæval England when in a homogeneous population the squire and the clergyman were the temporal and spiritual heads of the whole village. The Methodist circuit with its itinerant and local preachers was a system devised by John Wesley to suit the needs of 18th century evangelism. Superimposed on these we have the modifications brought about by missions

[2] In his article in *Religion and Society*, VI, No. 3, Oct. 1959.

when they first came to India, and worked on the basis of missionary, local helpers and converts. The characteristic feature of the mission was a hierarchy of Boards, Committees, Secretaries, which controlled from the main cities and towns the work done in rural areas. The New Testament conception of the local Church as the Body of Christ in that place fulfilling its ministry and mission within the village or town, in dependence upon the guidance and power of the Spirit, was lost sight of, and the local congregation depended instead upon the pastor for spiritual food and too often the mission for bodily food and shelter, which was doled out according to the decision of Board, Committee or missionary. This system was based upon 'control'. The defects of this system as seen today are:—

(*a*) This structure leads inevitably to a 'middle-class' Church since control is with the middle-class.

(*b*) The congregation lacks initiative especially in evangelism, because for years signs of enterprise were stifled by the centralised control of the purse.

(*c*) The very spiritual life of the Church is endangered because:

(1) either the minister is financed from outside and does not care much for his flock; or

(2) the intolerable strain of raising the minister's salary precludes the real spiritual nurture of the congregation.

(*d*) There is no flexibility- to engage in opportunity or project that presents itself—to join with another Church in any activity;

(*e*) It fosters class and caste distinctions and loyalties because of power factions;

(*f*) It gives room for every sort of desire and activity other than the truly spiritual function that the Church is for, through its elaborate machinery;

(*g*) At the same time, it does not foster that unity and fellowship that should characterise a congregation.

Bishop Chellappa says[3]: "A word must be said about the organisational set-up of the C.S.I. which is rather complicated, over-organised and Constitution-ridden, tempting our people to become legally-minded and Constitution-mad . . . The Christian Committee is a fellowship, a gathered community, summoned to ascertain and carry out God's will, as a body; a non-Christian committee foregathers in order to work

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 16 17.

up a majority mind, and to pass majority resolutions, which may conceivably be unrighteous. It follows that conventions and customs, which are accepted without question in non-Christian committees, must be challenged in a Christian committee. In too many Churches, power has been seized by the worst elements, and the work of God is held up sometimes for a whole generation; and the witness of that community is *against* Christ, rather than *for* Christ. From the Moderator's Diocese comes this criticism, quoted from elsewhere: 'We have plunged headlong into an organisational set-up that has invited more political activity for elections to office and has consequently dimmed the spiritual life of the Church'."

We must realise the fact that a great deal of the structure of the Church—even one like the C.S.I. worked out a little over a decade ago, is not in keeping with scripture or the traditions of the early Church but is the continuation of patterns that are both outworn and probably unsuitable to present-day conditions. But let us also realise that the Church is not a human organisation which can be reconstructed at will to be more adaptable to current social and economic needs. Change there must be, but it must be based on a fresh study of the nature of the Church, and its ministry as revealed to us in the Bible: A serious study of this problem must be undertaken by a group or by several groups in the light of their knowledge and experience before change can be devised.

Service to the Laity

1. *Urban.*—The services of conducting sacramental worship, study of the Word of God, nurture of spiritual life, and the building of fellowship in the congregation may be taken as expressing the minimum, if not the maximum, that could derive from the Church. This should lead on to the main mission of the Church as a whole—evangelism. As has been said earlier the Church must form the laymen and the lay men must transform the world. As we look at the life of our Churches we only too often find:

(*a*) Regularity in conducting worship;

(*b*) Some exposition of the Word of God;

(*c*) a little nurture of the spiritual life through pastoral counselling, Sunday Schools, etc.;

(*d*) neglect of the building of a fellowship in Christ.

There is room for improvement in every aspect of Church life. There are several points that may be raised:

The building of the congregational fellowship either as a whole, or in homogeneous and like-minded groups is an urgent necessity. The

original parish was a homogeneous group—the tenants and landless labourers of the squire. Our Christian fellowship should not follow necessarily class or caste patterns. But as a beginning homogeneous groups especially in cities could come together in a closer bond: such as a fellowship of businessmen, meeting at luncheon or a group of industrial workers at a factory who meet either at the factory itself or in each other's homes. Such groups would however meet with the whole congregation at services and Church functions, etc., and mingle with other groups. Among these congregational groups could well be a young people's fellowship which could meet to discuss common concerns, and study the Bible, and have social gatherings. The Sunday School could also form one such homogeneous group, meeting if necessary more often than on Sundays only and arranging other activities for themselves.

Another variation of this building of fellowship may be through the community pattern in suburban areas of cities. A Church in such an area could provide opportunities for the community by families to meet together not only for worship, but for studies and lectures through women's and men's groups as well as through young people's and children's activities.

It must however be stressed that the fellowship which may begin by being social and intellectual must have a common spiritual basis as its final end and aim. The Church should not degenerate into a social club but use the insights of organisations like the Y.M., Y.W. and S.C.M. to build a spiritual fellowship and community so necessary today. The spiritual fellowship may develop through the execution of various projects in the neighbourhood. This may find expression in personal or group projects of various types.

2. *Rural.*—It is clear from what has been said above that this plan would be more feasible in urban rather than rural Churches. It is also clear that if the main body of Christians still is in the villages our major concern should be for the rural congregations. Today our rural Churches, where some fellowship is even now in evidence, need to be strengthened on the service and sacramental side. They should not depend on occasional visits of a presbyter who hurriedly conducts a service and administers the sacrament once a month.

"Our people are naturally sacramental, but our present system gives them a fair amount of the Word, true, in somewhat dilute or muddy doses, but little of the Sacrament, which is occasionally and somewhat casually doled out by the peripatetic presbyter in one of his infrequent, lightning visits. As long as we depend exclusively on the present system of recruiting, training, posting and paying our clergy, this unnatural divorce between the Word and the Sacrament is bound

to continue, and to keep our village congregations in a 'spiritually anæmic state'—to use the phrase from an answer from a Diocese which was predominantly Methodist. We are, in fact, putting asunder what God hath joined together."

Here the solution may lie in going back to the New Testament pattern of recognising the congregation as the Church in that place and appointing local voluntary leaders as honorary deacons or presbyters to minister to their needs. Both Islam and Hinduism in India depend largely on voluntary service—which the Church has not adequately tapped in this way. While there are 20% of the Christians in the cities these seem to enjoy 80% of the resources in money and men while the 80% in the rural areas have to do with the rest. These honorary deacons need not supplant but may supplement the present presbyters, and could be rather simply trained and retrained from time to time. They would be under the guidance and supervision of the professional ministry.

This would be a welcome change in a Church where the ministry is almost wholly a paid ministry. In the history of India, movements that have spread have depended not upon a paid ministry but upon the enthusiasm of voluntary service. In fact, this is one of the ways that the Church may become more Indian, and more indigenous. It would certainly wipe out the criticism that we are a wholly 'cooly' Church.

Institutions.—Much of our Church's work is through *Institutions.* This question of the future of our institutions has been dealt with elsewhere and hence we need not spend much time on this question except to point out that the value of our institutions to the Christian effort has been greatly reduced through the vast efforts of the State and other organisations. Could we not use our institutions more wisely for the enriching and training of our own Church and for pilot projects and pioneering ventures?

Finance.—The Church in India cannot rightly be the Indian Church unless it can be self-supporting and not depend on overseas finances to such a 'fantastic and dangerous' degree. Speaking at the 1958 Synod on Towards an Indian Church, Bishop Chellappa said: "The most vulnerable side of the C.S.I. and what makes it difficult to sustain its claim to be *the* Church of South India, and not merely to be *a* Church *in* South India—is its fantastic, even dangerous, dependence on overseas support. I do not dispute that such support may be not only inevitable but right at the present stage, especially for pioneering efforts and for evangelistic experiments with a view to extension; or that the State itself has begun to realise how beholden it is to better off countries. The Church is surely ecumenical not least in the sense that it may legitimately draw really needed support from sister Churches in other parts

of the world. But what is not so good—and should cause us all sleepless nights—is the alarming extent of our dependence, even for pastoral and educational work, and for work, which, strictly speaking, is not indispensable to the Christian enterprise. The stoppage of such subsidy, even with notice, would seriously dislocate our whole programme."

There is a need to simplify, and to call for more dedicated Christian giving. While there is a limit to Christian giving on the part of a poverty-stricken community, giving in the Indian Church is largely sporadic and not based on any principle; it has no relation to the ideals set forth by the late Bishop Azariah in his book "Christian Giving". The Church cannot be ours till we make it ours by giving not only our means but ourselves to its service.

Foreign Personnel.—Some mention must be made of the integration of foreign personnel into the mission and enterprise of the Indian Church. The debate on this matter has gone on long enough to clarify the issues involved. It still, however, does present an area in which the Church needs to modify its policy and use of missionary personnel from abroad.

Lay Organisations.—The missions and Churches themselves have been engaged in such varied and diverse activities that little thought was given to the function of Lay Organisations. The time has come and now is, when the place of these organisations is basic to the reorganisation of the life and ministry of the Church. Speaking for the Y.M.C.A., lay organisations have felt that the Church has not given its whole-hearted support to the work of these organisations. The pattern of the future may be that the Church work not so much through institutions such as schools, colleges, hospitals and other institutes, but through lay organisations which take responsibility for various projects and areas of need.

This pattern fits in more closely with the thinking of the nature and function of the whole Church on the one hand, and bridges the gulf between the Churches as religious organisations and non-Christian Society. Some lay organisations such as the Y.M.C.A., and the Y.W.C.A. have already built up considerable goodwill among non-Christians who are members and among the general public. This liaison should aid the Church in its primary mission of evangelisation as well in its task in being the leaven of the new India. In re-thinking the pattern of the life and ministry a fresh emphasis needs to be laid on the work and opportunities of lay organisations.

Adaptability

One of the charges against the Indian Chruch is that it is not flexible or adaptable—not even as flexible as several of the mission organisations

still in the country. In this connection I believe that great lessons can be learnt from other bodies whose experience in the past of work in India can be channelled into our organisational structure:

(*a*) The Roman Catholic Church seems to find no difficulty in finding recruits for its celibate ministry. In fact, it is able to build up a pool of available Mothers and Fathers in training to be sent on special missions. The mobility, the rigorous training, the self-sacrifice of such a ministry should certainly be kept in mind in planning any great reorganisation in the Protestant Indian Church.

(*b*) In contrast to the rigid discipline and order of the Catholics stand Quakers—Society of Friends—who have a loose organisation but mobilise their laymen most effectively for service. Their experience has not been used at all thus far in the structure of the Indian Church or sections of it.

(*c*) Even our own indigenous Ashrams have not really entered the main stream of the life of the Indian Church as they rightly should. While the number of Ashrams has risen to 24 or over, the influence these have wielded on the Church as a whole is negligible. Could the Church for instance use the Ashram more effectively in the training of presbyters combining Ashram living and forms of service with the theological education of the ministry? This would bring about a new orientation.

The National Missionary Society has experimented with such a pattern, but its experience again has not been integrated into the Church. Would the Church's mission to India touch the Indian mind and heart more closely if some such pattern was set up?

It is also noteworthy and two other organisations which have had considerable influence in India have had systems similarly organised—the Ramakrishna Mission and the Sarvodaya Movement.

Do not these movements and organisations have a greater adaptability, mobility and appeal than the Church as it is, by and large, today. If so, can we not learn from them, taking what we may be guided under the hand of God to take and studying the matter carefully and prayerfully in the light of Scripture.

Conclusion

Let us then sum up some of the changes in the pattern of the Fellowship and the organised Life and Ministry of the Church which may help us in India to achieve more closely our mission and prophetic task:

(1) We want a truly indigenous Church—Indian in spirit, in mind and in organisation, able to speak to the heart and soul of India in terms intelligible to her, and to serve her in the most acceptable manner.

(2) We need to break down barriers that we have built around ourselves, or that non-Christian Society has built around us—so that we are no longer in isolation. We need to enter once more the main stream of the changing life of the country.

(3) Having entered this stream we believe that we have a prophetic mission, to win our land for the Kingdom through evangelism, and through service. This service involves the work of a creative minority as outlined by Toynbee.

(4) We need to re-think and reform our organisational structure in the light of the experience of the democratic Churches now functioning in India, which has report of power politics and squabbles within the Church destroying its fellowship.

(5) We need to take steps to build up the Fellowship in and through our local congregations. This aspect of the Church's service has not been fully realised so far. The Church has not been adequately central in the life of Christians.

(6) We have to re-think the recruitment and training of ministers in the light of our needs particularly in the villages. This may be done by returning to the N.T. pattern of voluntary local leadership being given responsibility.

(7) We need to re-think the deployment and use of our institutional work.

(8) We need to consider with great care the problem of Finance—especially the heavy subsidies the Indian Church still receives from abroad.

(9) We need to integrate foreign personnel more fully into the Indian Church.

(10) We need to support and use lay organisations instead of Church organisations for our work first in nation-building tasks, but also in the mission of evangelism.

(11) We need to profit by the experience of and attempt to use some of the techniques of (*a*) The Roman Catholic Church, (*b*) The Quakers—the Society of Friends, (*c*) Ashram-based movements such as Ashrams themselves, the N.M.S., the Ramakrishna Mission and Sarvodaya Movement.

(12) We cannot transform the India of today unless we are first prepared to transform ourselves. It must be understood that though we attempt to transform our fellowship and the organised life and ministry of the Church even such transformation is of no avail, unless God Himself transforms the Indian Church through our penitence and surrender more fully to his will. If we are to be with Christ in India, and walk with Him, we must indeed put on the mind of Christ and be transformed by His Holy Spirit. Thus only can we be 'a sign lifted up among the nations' for salvation and judgment.

CASTE AND COMMUNAL STRUCTURES AS THEY AFFECT DEMOCRACY*

By P. D. Devanandan, *Bangalore*

Castes and Caste-Spirit

Undoubtedly the caste structure of Indian society is loosening, more noticeably so in urban than in rural India. It is not necessary here to go into the reasons for this change. But it would be useful for us to take account of the consequences of this change. Some of these consequences may be briefly referred to. (1) Educational opportunities being now made available to people of all castes, many people of what once were low-caste and outcaste groups have taken to lucrative professions and have become economically better off. (2) Also they have gained confidence and self-respect. They refuse to admit that they are in any sense inferior. They demand their rights in society, as men among men. (3) Moreover, the industrialization of the country has drawn away a number of people from traditional occupations which kept them under caste domination. It has also raised their standard of living. (4) It is no longer possible to draw a hard and fast line between urban and rural culture. Easy communication, the general acceptance of a monetary economy, availability of the amenities of life in town and village alike have brought into the traditional village social structure the same destructive forces which have undermined the caste fabric in town life. (5) Finally, the directives in our Constitution which recognise no discrimination based on caste, and adult franchise which gives the right of vote irrespective of caste origin, have raised not only the political standing but also the social status of those who were once regarded as low-caste and outcaste.

Alongside of these changes viewed caste-wise, account should also be taken of the changes in social institutions. The joint-family is giving place to the smaller unit of the nuclear family. The emancipation of the Indian woman from traditional restrictions and the equality that she is steadily claiming for herself visibly affect the institution of marriage. Political rights apart, now that she has property claims, freedom for divorce, and independence of social decision, time honoured customs like arranged marriages, dowry and *pardah* in some form or another, are all laid in question. It may be that these changes are just beginning, but it is clear that what has begun will lead on to more drastic consequences. There is no going back on them to the

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old *mores*. Social intercourse is no longer entirely conditioned by caste considerations, certainly not in our urban areas. Economic status, educational attainments, professional standing group people together, even in the matter of neighbourhood housing accommodation and undoubtedly in the matter of recreational associations and fellowship. Social stratification today cuts across caste lines.

But when all this has been said, any careful observer of contemporary Indian society would also notice that there is another side to the picture. In the first place, while the traditional caste structure of Indian society is undoubtedly breaking down, the 'caste-spirit' is finding new forms of expression and is gaining new content. People are not willing to admit that what we call fundamental human rights should be extended to every human person. The fact of a common humanity and of social solidarity is not granted in actual practice though it may be conceded as a matter of social theory. Our Hindu heritage is in part responsible for this persisting caste-spirit because humanity (*purushatva*) has always been associated in our thinking with the variety (*nanatva*) of the limitations of individual manyness than with the common humanity of man. And it is on this basis of fragmentation of society that our social philosophy was constructed, rather than on the fact of community, as Sirdar K. M. Panikkar has ably argued in his book, *Hindu Society at Cross Roads*. And he has also pointed out that unless we take action to correct this tendency to social fragmentation by deliberately developing a sense of community we shall not be able to make a success of democracy.

There is another underlying assumption in this phenomenon of the 'caste-spirit' so called which is not discussed much. It is somehow tied up in our Indian way of thinking with manual labour, on the one hand, and with landed possession on the other. The higher up you go in the caste scale the less you do by way of hard physical work. You are waited upon. Other people, the low-caste and the outcaste folk do all that. In our early economy which was largely feudalistic this idea of work naturally is tied up with the possession of landed property. The more you have of it, the less you work yourself. It is not sufficiently realized that because of our peculiar historical background Land, Labour and Prestige are all bound up with the 'caste-spirit'. Therefore, if the caste-spirit is to go, drastic changes in our ideas of landed property and false notions about the indignity of labour will have to go. Yet another strange phenomenon connected with the caste-spirit is what is called "educated unemployed"—something which you do not hear of in democratic countries. If the educated caste does not find employment it is because we cannot see how people who have been educated can do manual labour.

Communities and Communalism

During the period of the British Rule in our history the inherent tendency among the Indian people to underscore caste differences was shrewdly exploited by the foreign government in order to strengthen its hold on the people. On the one hand, British administration recognized the importance of establishing a form of government which was based on popular will and steadily introduced parliamentary institutions which were increasingly representative of and responsible to the people. On the other hand, it considered it wise to limit representation and responsibility by relating them to recognised sections of the population, to communities based on a complex principle of division which took account of differences in religion, culture and caste. Not only Moslems, Sikhs, Christians and Parsis were thus separated from the majority population of Hindus, but the Hindus themselves were divided into Brahmin, non-Brahmin and Depressed Classes. So that democratic institutions developed in British India with a communalistic bias which they have still to overcome. Communalism is at its best group solidarity and at its worst collective individualism.

It may be true that only in so far as the different sections of the country are organised for self-discipline and self-development that they can best contribute for the common weal of the nation. There are common interests of such groups which need to be safeguarded by common action. There may also be social evils within the group which are best reformed by common action taken by the group. As a matter of fact what came to be known as communal organizations in our country during the British period were primarily designed to promote schemes of self-help and self-correction through joint action of the members of the group. But the danger in all these communal organizations is three-fold: (1) They tend to become self-centred and insular. (2) They lose sight of the larger goals of the entire nation of which they form part. (3) They become obsessed with the idea that their progress is retarded by the pressure of other communal groups and that they can only advance at the expense of other communities. This leads to communal rivalry. In any case the cause of democracy is not served. Unrestrained communalism is a direct negation of democracy.

The Problem of Indian Democracy

Democracy as a form of political institution and as a way of life is new to us. The democratic pattern of State and Society in India is something we have to grow into. This means that the approach has to be both in terms of social adjustment and political education.

Eventually the 'caste-spirit' is undemocratic for it still persists in the assumption that all men are not entitled to equal opportunities. But the 'caste-spirit' does not stop short of this assumption. It goes further and takes active steps to prevent others claiming such equality because it is felt that in so doing they make inroads into our special preserves. The cry is then raised: "Our interests are in danger. They need to be safeguarded!" Whatever the original intention of *varnadharma* it cannot be gainsaid that in the long course of Indian history caste separatism assumed rigorous proportions because membership in a caste group gave an individual added security, collective strength, and social prestige. There were common interests tied up with generally accepted customs, blood kinship, property holding and religious rites. They were emphasized because they marked off one caste from another.

There is little doubt that the British hold on India was maintained by playing up communal rivalry, but at the same time democratic institutions flourished. In the struggle for freedom from foreign domination not only was the democratic principle generally accepted but the parliamentary institutions of secular democracy came to be integral to the form of self-government that eventually gained constitutional recognition. When Independence was secured we deliberately chose to be a Secular Democratic Welfare State.

Now it is true that almost the first thing that we tried to achieve through constitutional action was (1) to put an end to all caste discrimination and (2) to abolish communal representation. As such they do not exist any longer in our midst. But, as was pointed out earlier, the sinister forces behind both these institutions of Caste and Communal Representation have however come back into our political life, by the back door as it were. Nehru calls this phenomenon "Casteism", because it is a strange combination of caste and communalism.

The reason for this manifestation is somewhat complex, but easily understood. Parliamentary forms of democratic institutions involve the exercise of power relegated by the vote which gives the party that gets into power the right to shape the policy of the government and to execute it in the day-to-day administration of the state. In a sense this race for power is partly due to past memories of oppression and injustice which communities as communities still harbour. The fear of Brahmin domination in some States have set non-Brahmin groups to organize and fight elections on that basis. In some places one particular non-Brahmin group confronts another non-Brahmin group in the struggle for power and seeks the support of outcaste groups as outcaste

groups. For political action in our country is still group action. Similarly language groups set themselves up against other language groups in the race for political power. The real problem in all this is how best to develop a sense of over-riding loyalty for the common good of the whole nation without which no democratic pattern of State or Society can be constructed. For only such a larger devotion can subsume these separatist tendencies which we have inherited.

Social Reform and the Christian Contribution

In this connection I would like to draw attention to three significant statements in a recent book by Mr. S. Natarajan on *A Century of Social Reform in India*.[1] One is: "The principle of unity in diversity is the root principle of which Indian religion, philosophies, society and history are manifestations". The great hold which this principle has both on scholarly intellect and popular imagination is not sufficiently realized. Wherever we are confronted by differences which are not easily reconcilable we resort to this comforting assurance of ultimate oneness. But unity in diversity was at no time a social objective towards which we have deliberately endeavoured to move. It has been rather a spiritual ideal characteristic of India's religious quest, never concretely translated in the language of the practical concerns of human relations in society and politics. It is different today. As a people we are more alive than ever in our history to the desperate need for unity as a nation state and the distressing fact of diversity. What is more, we have accepted the democratic ideal as the goal of our political and social aspirations. Can these two principles of democracy and of unity in diversity be reconciled? What is called for in our attempts to make democracy indigenous to our culture is to show that diversity should not be confused with inequality, and that diversity is secured in dynamic democracy by interdependence and co-operation.

Natarajan also makes out that "the distinctive characteristics of the social reform movements in India are that it starts from a religious basis, is attracted by the ideas rather than the forms of Western civilisation, and has for its watchword Evolution and not Revolution". It is well to bear in mind that our social structure is conditioned by "a religious basis". This does not mean that caste, for instance, is so bound up with Hindu religion that when a Hindu becomes a Christian or a Muslim, he gives up caste. History does not bear out that hope; certainly not in Christian India, nor in Muslim India for that matter. The religious basis Natarajan refers to are certain assump-

[1] Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1959, pp. 3, 13 and 8.

tions about the nature of man as an individual and about mankind in a network of relations constituting a social unit for which the sanctions of any religion may be consciously or unconsciously invoked. The general acceptance in recent times of the democratic idea has resulted in a social ferment in India, because it has laid in question the traditional assumptions of our culture in regard to man and society. Undoubtedly it has also set people in India thinking about "the religious basis": more so among Hindus than among Christians. For among Christians during the period of *A Century of Social Reform in India* which Natarajan has so well described, there has been no evidence of any social reform movement worth the mention in Indian Christianity. With us also the watchword has been Evolution rather than Revolution. But the point that Natarajan makes in drawing attention to this watchword is that in India, throughout the course of her history, there has been a conscious effort to maintain a continuity. In spite of periodic irruptions of alien culture resulting from foreign invasions, there has been no radical break with the past. Changes were accepted not so much as innovations but as in some way to be regarded as developments, however tenuously tacked on to the past. If this process of cultural change may be described as evolution, it must also be accepted at the same time that there is not only an unwillingness to discard what is outmoded but a nostalgic clinging to traditional *mores*.

The persistence of the caste outlook and the continuing adherence to traditional social institutions among Indian Christians is in great measure due to the desire to maintain a continuity with their cultural past and to relate themselves to the present environment. The failure of Indian Christianity in this regard—for it must be considered a failure—is because the Gospel of the New Creation has not been truly apprehended as the message of hope for the restoration of man and the world to the divine purpose in creation. The response of faith to the redemptive power of God assured in the Word Incarnate is to adventure into the present possibilities of the new man in the new world into which the old man and the old world have been turned when God became man in Jesus Christ. Here are Evolution and Revolution with a difference. They do not demand that the Christian 'convert' should be isolated culturally and socially but that, in the very context of life in which he is placed, he witness to this fact of the New Creation. "The greatest obstacles in the way of the Church giving an effective message to caste neighbours," reports Dr. A. T. Fishman[2] in his recent study of the Telugu Baptist Church, "are still the low caste origin of Christians and caste prejudice within the Church. True, in Christian

[2] *For This Purposes*, Guntur, 1958, p. 58.

marriages, origins have been ignored in some cases; inter-dining is common. But caste of origin as a barrier to full Christian fellowship and evangelistic outreach continues too strong to justify Christians making any vigorous rejoinder to charges by non-Christians, such as this which appeared in the questionnaire of the Government-appointed Backward Classes Commission in June 1953: 'The painful fact is that even religions that came to India with the avowed object of fighting our social evils have themselves succumbed to the atmosphere and are now seeking assistance to eradicate, from among themselves, the very evils they came to destroy' ".

Over against this statement quoted by Dr. Fishman, it is chastening for the Christian to turn to the third observation of Natarajan which struck me in reading his book. "The fear of Christianity," Natarajan remarks, "was the beginning of social wisdom in Hinduism". That is how the Hindu views the Christian impact! The fear is still there, that we represent a divisive force in nation-building, because of our tendency to religious communalism and cultural isolation. Until we can disprove these allegations, our contribution to social reform and nation-buidling will remain at a discount.

U.P. CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY—FOREIGN SUPPORT AND LEADERSHIP*

By S. L. Parmar, *Allahabad*

The presence of problems indicates life in a group. But the important thing is to know what kind of life is reflected through existing problems. Is it stagnant and decaying or dynamic and progressing? Perhaps the problems of the Christian community in U.P. reflect more prominently the elements of stagnation and decay: certainly a state of bewildered floundering. In a dynamic group, problems are generators of new life and help to build up a real spirit of development and growth. Our purpose should, therefore, be to suggest a way out from our present position of stagnation and to use our problems for a leap forward.

It is so easy to spot weaknesses. Diagnosis is often easier than treatment. However, our starting point has to be self-evaluation and self-analysis. And yet, while decrying our failings we should not forget our points of strength. Real development begins by spotting the points of strength and building upon them. Thus the Christian community in U.P. starts with several advantages. It has a high percentage of educated members and is a fairly enlightened and forward looking group. Moreover, our so-called *deculturedness* could be deemed an advantage as it leaves us free to select and adopt suitable cultural and behaviour patterns.

I am afraid my comments are extremely general in nature. Generalisations have the advantage of making one appear wiser than he is and are, for that very reason, dangerous. They tend to reflect one's bias and predilections and thus present a distorted picture. But if my generalisations serve as a starting point for useful discussion, they will meet a need.

Foreign Support

There is general agreement among all sections of Christian opinion that the traditional pattern of foreign support and our over-dependence on it represent a fundamental weakness in our Church and community life.

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* A paper presented at the Rajpur (Dehra Dun) Consultation (September 12–16, 1959) on *The Political, Economic and Social Problems of the U.P. Christian Community*. Sri. Parmar is on the staff of the Department of Economics of the Holland Hall, University of Allahabad.

In several significant ways foreign support has adversely affected our attitudes and efforts. It has bred in us a psychology of servility to the foreign helpers (individuals and organisations), encouraged an unhealthy competition for positions of power and profit, injected jealousy, dissension and strife into the group and inhibited constructive effort for growth and development. Because financial help is so easily available from outside, we have acquired the habit of expecting it and leaning upon it. This has atrophied our spirit of self-reliance, self-help and self-expression. I have it on good authority that increased "askings from abroad" have become a regular part of the budget of many of our organisations. Last year a senior missionary said to me that the problem (for both the Indian Church and the Church in U.S.A.) is not that we have too little money but that we have too much money. It would be no exaggeration to say that a good part of the Christian work in U.P. will suffer a serious setback if foreign support is reduced. A sudden stoppage of foreign help would, of course, be disastrous. Therefore, this matter calls for thoughtful and constructive consideration by us. If the existing pattern of foreign support hampers the consolidation and self-sustained growth of our community and stifles our Christian witness, there is a *prima facie* case for radical changes in its form and content.

I will not join the ranks of the Utopians who suggest a sudden and complete stoppage of foreign help. That would be suicidal for our community. But foreign help should cease to be our life-blood. After over a century of "living on charity" Christian work in U.P. remains as dependent as ever. Such a position is extremely unstable and dangerous. In the life of a virile and witnessing Christian community that can face the challenges of the day, foreign help should be incidental, not essential. We have to find sources of life and strength within the country. Admittedly, the life and strength of the Church and Christian community is much more than its monetary and material resources. Yet when survival seems to depend on foreign support, one is tempted to emphasise the purely economic aspect more. The so-called "mission compound mentality" is itself a by-product of our foreign dependence. In this background any effort at increased self-support and financial independence would serve as a shot in the arm and help in the process of revitalisation of the life of our community. Today, it would appear that in our area the Christian community does not have an individuality and personality of its own. It is not even a pale reflection of the parent Churches abroad. There is hardly any internal integration. As such, its service and witnessing potential remains ill-utilised or unutilised. A move towards greater self-reliance will definitely generate health-giving forces and lead to a better utilisa-

tion of our potentialities. There is no virtue in self-support as such, just as there is nothing obnoxious in outside help. We could be self-supporting and yet woefully weak in Christian living and witnessing. But when several weaknesses of our community may be directly or indirectly traced to the erstwhile pattern of foreign support, its modification and gradual elimination should be considered desirable.

The ecumenical view of foreign support requires examination. It is said that we should not think in narrow nationalistic terms but in terms of the Church Universal and the worldwide fellowship of Christians. The stronger sections should, therefore, support and sustain the weaker. I have several difficulties in understanding this viewpoint. Firstly, why should strength and weakness be considered at the dollar and rupee level only? Must we draw only on the material strength of foreign Churches? Oftentimes, when existing programmes are expanded or new projects initiated, the phrase "venture of faith" is associated with them. Faith in what terms? That God will give us vision, a spirit of service and a sense of dedication, or that at our "open sesame" God will loosen the purse strings of the foreign givers and meet our material requirements? Why should we reduce an act of faith in God to a gross business transaction? It is indeed a sad commentary on our affairs that a venture of faith has become so limited in range. We are advised to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you". But our narrowed faith (amounting almost to faithlessness) puts the "all these things" before "the Kingdom of God". Ecumenism is a union of hearts. Sharing of material resources is a by-product of such union. But our attitude seems to have raised the incidental element to a position of pre-eminence. Moreover, the ecumenical movement should help various national Churches to grow in indigenous ways of service and witness and to so function as to be more meaningful in their sphere of activity. Depending for finances on foreign groups defeats this purpose, whereas greater self-reliance helps in its attainment.

Secondly, there is the glaring onesidedness of this relationship. If this worldwide fellowship is to function on a give-and-take basis, one would like to know what we are giving. "They" extend help to us; we extend only an open palm ! This is not a temporary picture; it has assumed all the rigidities of permanency. So it was, so it continues to be and so it will remain till wisdom or pressure changes it. As recipients of help we should offer gratitude in return. I feel that we have forgotten even this common courtesy. The most vehement critics of missions and missionaries are those who have enjoyed the greatest benefits from these agencies. This is one fact which struck

us as significant in the course of the study on "Economic Differentials".* A strange contradiction in the make-up of the mission-dependent section of our community is the hypocrisy that precedes help and the hostility and ingratitude that follow it. At the moment I have serious doubts if, as a Church and a community, we are able to offer anything really worthwhile to the world-Church. This onesidedness of foreign help becomes an argument for its reorientation.

Thirdly, we must first have an individuality and a personality before we can be equal partners in the Church Universal. Do we have it? I have already given my view. If then we are an amalgam of confused and heterogeneous elements, the pressing need is to achieve integration before we claim the benefits of ecumenicity.

Let me terminate this tale of woe and suggest certain specific steps which should be taken to set us on the road to recovery.

Consolidation and Development

Some kind of survey and planning is absolutely essential. Each unit of Christian work should evaluate its needs, resources and objectives. May be it is time that proper stock-taking and planning should be done by each denomination. Let us start with a Five-Year Plan (to keep up with current fashion !). Each denomination should examine its requirements, current and potential internal resources, current and potential help from outside, etc. Methods should be devised for strengthening the giving habit in our community. Rationalisation of existing work, possibilities of bringing idle resources into use, elimination of wasteful expenditure, reform of organisational patterns in terms of our economic limitations, etc., are matters that would reward survey and evaluation. Perhaps if any one denomination conducted an extensive study and drew up a plan, it would serve as a guide to others and prompt them to similar action.

Our effort should be consolidation, not expansion. Existing institutions and programmes should first be put on a sound financial and organisational footing before new projects are initiated. I am told that substantial amounts of foreign funds have recently been spent on all varieties of new projects, many of which were wound up after a short and none-too-eventful existence and left in their wake a good deal of resentment, frustration and bitterness for those concerned. It seems that money is more easily available for new programmes than for existing ones. That does not appear very logical to me. But then, I am a conservative !

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* *A Study of Economic Differentials*, by C. M. Chatterji, M.A., Ph.D. and S. L. Parmar, M.A., Christian Retreat & Study Centre, P.O. Rajpur, Dehra Dun. (Printed for private use only.)

Foreign support should take the shape of developmental expenditure or productive investment rather than expenditure for maintenance and current consumption. We must plan to establish productive enterprises that will provide an ongoing income and will thereby gradually reduce the quantum of foreign help needed. So many Christian institutions have functioned for decades but are still existing on a hand-to-mouth basis. They have no endowments, no sources of recurring income, no productive resources, only a constantly growing budget of expenditure. Lakhs of rupees have gone into these units. To what purpose? Certainly not to make them so helpless that stoppage of foreign funds means closure. The form of help received so far is responsible for our predicament. Foreign support should sustain a sufficiently strong investment programme so as to ensure greater stability for our work in the future. This is in keeping with the modern concept of "helping others to help themselves". In discussing certain suggestions (similar to this one) made in the study of "Economic Differentials" a veteran missionary said to me that this proposal for productive investments would, if accepted, make the Indian Church too much money-minded. My submission is that the Church is already blatantly money-minded and in a rather undignified fashion. Then again, if dealing in large sums and enterprises makes a Church money-minded, the Western Church organisations would be steeped in money-mindedness, for they deal in large sums. I think, however, that the comment referred more to our inadequate sense of stewardship than anything else. In many instances the leadership in our area has been weighed and found wanting in a sense of responsibility and Christian stewardship. This is an unfortunate fact, but a fact that I am prepared to substantiate. But this is more a question of leadership than of plans for greater self-reliance. At the moment I am thinking only about the latter.

A definite time limit should be set after which foreign support will remain only a token contribution. This will lend a sense of urgency to our efforts and will indicate that, at last, all of us mean business. Such a practice is followed with regard to the "Indigenisation Fund" of the United Church of North India.

A more adequate and comprehensive meaning should be found for international sharing. If attempts at self-support deteriorate into narrow nationalism they become self-defeating in a world where no Christian group should rest content with ploughing a lonely furrow. Sharing of personnel, experience, training opportunities, etc., would be healthier forms of interdependence.

I am sure that many other more effective methods can be suggested by others. The important thing is to realise the need for new methods and adjust our outlook accordingly.

Leadership

In the development of any underdeveloped area, leadership is the key factor. As the Christian community in U.P. contains many elements of underdevelopment, it stands to reason that its progress calls for strong, responsible and dedicated leadership.

Leadership must be supplied by the more privileged section of the community; it must come from the top. This is in keeping with the pattern of leadership in underdeveloped sectors. Labour leadership in India is drawn from the intelligentsia and the middle-class, as is also political leadership. It is merely a catch phrase in our setting to speak of leadership "coming from the masses". Only after a period of democratic living under which suitable democratic traditions are evolved will we reach the point where such slogans can be converted into reality.

This trend of "top-grown" leadership creates psychological and economic problems and colours relationships within the group. Inequalities are magnified and extended. Modern economic theory explains certain phenomenon through the principle of circular and cumulative causation. This principle emphasises the one-directional movement of an economy as against the oscillation around a certain norm as contained in the traditional stable equilibrium approach. Within a system an initial change gives rise to supporting changes rather than countervailing changes so that the movement of the initial change is magnified. Thus the privileged section tends to become better off at each successive stage, whereas the less privileged sections keep sinking lower. Poverty becomes the cause of further poverty and prosperity that of further prosperity. In the absence of any regulations or interference, this process of growing inequality continues. "A country is poor because it is poor" is a dictum that aptly describes this tendency.

Such a process has been at work in our community. The growing prosperity of one section does not result from exploitation of the other; it is caused by social processes. But in most cases this is not appreciated, with the result that the privileged are always targets of the less privileged. Resultant tensions, jealousies, and rivalries vitiate our community and Church life. One cannot hope that the underprivileged group will be convinced of the *bonafides* of the better-off section by a knowledge of such theories. They would perhaps consider

such explanations as attempts at self-justification and rationalisation. But the important thing is that the privileged section from whom the effective leadership comes should recognise the implications of the circular causation principle. If the system is lacking a self-adjusting mechanism as a result of which inequalities are growing, they should, through conscious effort and policy measures, introduce checks and regulations which may function as correctives. This is the challenge to our leadership. Once the less privileged section of the community is raised to a certain level (described in modern economic literature as the point of "take-off into sustained growth") it will be easier for it to maintain a rapidly rising momentum of progress. Soon we should have the elements of a classless Christian society. Thus, the initiative for initiating processes of equalisation rests with the enlightened "top-grown" leadership. More egalitarian policies must be introduced into Church and institutional life.

Our community in U.P. is unfortunately not free from the charge of being a class-ridden group. From the old caste pattern based upon the accident of birth we have acquired a new class pattern based upon the accident of income, position and authority. Between the missionary at the top and the humble mission worker at the bottom there are several categories of "high" and "not so high". Economic differences engender class-consciousness. This is a problem which calls for immediate attention and reform. Our leadership, belonging as it does to the upper class, must function under the directive "To whom more is given, from him more is expected". The existence of glaring inequalities and class distinctions within the Christian fold is an anachronism and lends strength to the Marxian view that religion is the opiate of the people, fashioned by the privileged to keep the underprivileged content and docile in face of exploitation.

Tolerance of poverty and class distinction is unchristian. Our Lord's words—"The poor ye have always with you"—is not a statement of fact but rather an indictment of and a judgment on our hard-heartedness that generates, tolerates and perpetuates poverty. We can glory in only one kind of poverty—that of the spirit. But that generates selflessness and makes each one his brother's keeper.

Responsible Christian leadership has also to guard against the "V.I.P. attitude". The moment it acquires the reprehensible traits of a V.I.P., it erects a barrier between itself and the majority of our people. Furthermore, it should be remembered that the behaviour-patterns of leadership have a tremendous "demonstration effect". Lesser leaders, prospective leaders, and pseudo leaders imitate their superiors with the result that the whole group is in danger of being

permeated with a wrong psychology. Therefore, the behaviour-patterns of the leaders should represent all the Christian virtues we so loudly proclaim. Our leaders have to overcome the natural temptation to patronage, superiority feelings and the like. If we feel that sacrifice is needed to strengthen our community life we must display that sacrifice in our own lives before advocating it. An ounce of example is worth a pound of advice. So often it is said, and not without justification, that Christian leadership is modelling itself on prevailing patterns of leadership in the country. That, if true, is a sad commentary on us. Who is influencing whom ? Are the secular and non-moral tendencies to put their mark upon us, or are we to put a Christian impress on the thoughts and actions of the non-Christian world by our precepts and practices ? "To win India for Christ" will remain an empty slogan until we first win victory over ourselves and are well equipped to make a Christ-inspired impact on society.

Within our leadership there exists a pull between the Church-drawn leaders and those drawn from other institutions, educational, medical, etc. In general, the latter have better qualifications in terms of education, income and influence on the community. In several cases Church affairs are controlled by institution-sponsored leadership. There is thus a two-sided tussle within the leadership—between non-mission workers and mission workers and between institutional workers and Church workers. I am told that these differences assume serious proportions in Synods and Church Councils. Given the opportunity each group tends to dominate the other. As usual there are faults on both sides. The important thing, however, is to recognise the causes of such dissension and to strive for co-ordination, cohesiveness and team spirit. After all, we are all fellow-workers in a common cause.

Then there is the traditional distinction between laity and clergy. It seems to have become the job of the laity to leave Christian witnessing to the clergy and play the role of judge and jury. The clergy thus finds itself mostly on the defensive. It is high time that the laity understood its responsibility within the total Christian effort. To a non-theologian like myself, Christ's directive "Go ye out into all the world and preach" applies to all those who are Christians by choice and conviction. In that sense we are all ordained for Christian service by Christ himself and the laity must bear their full share of the burden of Christian witness. Considering our economic weaknesses and the problems we experience in securing enough full-time Christian workers, the role of the laity assumes added significance. As the larger part of the community consists of the laity, it is obvious that an effective, witnessing laity can revolutionise the total Christian effort in our area.

Nasrapur Findings—I

CHRISTIAN PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL LIFE*

Introduction

Christian participation in political life is not only an obligation placed on us by our common citizenship, but is also a part of our obligation to our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. While we accept this obligation we hold in India's present secular democratic set-up (*a*) that the Church as Church should not identify itself with any one of the political parties and (*b*) that Christians should not organise themselves into a political party. This, however, does not preclude lending active support to a specific programme of one political party wherever such a programme is understood to be serving the larger interest of the country. In fact, if we at all wish to make a contribution through Christian insights in the nation-building efforts of our Government, an active, sustained, intelligent and informed participation in political life appears now to be inevitable.

Our Major Needs

(i) Among the basic needs that the Christians in India are confronted with is the need for political education, *viz.*, the enlightenment of the Christian voters towards the understanding of the structure of political forces in the country, the programmes of various political parties and their bearing on national progress, which will persuade them to join a democratic political party, exercise their votes in all elections, local, state and national and also enable them to vote in an intelligent and responsible manner.

(ii) There is the need for a continuous contact with members of the provincial and central legislatures in order to advise them of the Christian point of view on specific issues, *e.g.*, contemplated progressive legislation or disputed clauses in controversial bills, or even problems of domestic and foreign policies of the Government agitating the public mind—for quite often our non-Christian fellow-citizens, due to lack of communication, are ignorant of any Christian opinion.

(iii) We wish to emphasise that Christian public opinion *inter alia* must do every thing to promote the principle of the secular state which

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* The Findings of the Nasrapur Consultation, January 1960, which concluded the Bombay Follow-up Study on Social Questions begun in 1956.

informs the constitution of our country, for it guarantees religious freedom and other human rights for all. At the same time it must also be constantly vigilant of any governmental action which violates any of those rights.

(iv) We further suggest that Christian opinion should align itself indubitably with the national goal of establishing a socialist pattern of society as inspired by the Directive Principles of State Policy embodied in the Constitution.

(v) We think it is also necessary that Christian opinion should be explicitly stated on all matters of national importance and the plans and policies of the Government so as to guide the rank and file of the Christian community. Such an expression of opinion, it is hoped, will enable them to participate in all governmental programmes which are socially progressive and to lend an active support to acceptable policies.

(vi) Not the least among our needs is the need for adequately publicising the findings of consultations and conferences.

(vii) In the statement of these urgent needs, we are not unmindful of the development and signs of such tendencies as seek to undermine not only the ideal of the secular state but also the political unity and stability of the country. We view with grave concern the serious departure in practice from the secular principle in several of the states with unfortunate consequences that bear upon Christian and other minorities. In this context we think that Christian opinion should seek to act as a guide to all who allow their political attitudes to be influenced by caste and communal prejudices.

Methods of Participation

(i) With a view to fulfil the needs stated above, we think that the National Christian Council and the Regional Christian Councils, the S.C.M., Y.M. and Y.W.C.A.s and other Christian organisations have a great role to play. In this connection we cannot help but stress the need for a greater working liaison between all these agencies. In particular we wish to suggest that the N.C.C. should explore the possibility of co-ordinating the aims and activities of existing Christian organisations, like the I.C.A., C.U., the Masih Sangh, etc., etc. and attempt to evolve, if possible, one independent lay organisation which will concern itself with the political education of the Christians and the organisation of their legitimate concerns in political life.

(ii) The Regional Councils, we suggest, should set up political committees after the manner of other committees whose membership

must be extended to outstanding Christians actively interested in public affairs. Again the Regional Councils through these committees and the local Churches should sponsor citizenship courses which will include instructions on contemporary political ideologies, organisations and programmes of political parties and on national and international problems and conduct summer schools, seminars and consultations for the members of the Church. A programme giving an outline of the courses of instructions on civic affairs could easily be drawn up by Christian organisations like the S.C.M. and Y.M. and Y.W.C.A.s in collaboration with Christian teachers of social sciences in their respective areas. Or a model outline of such a course could well be drafted and circulated by the N.C.C. or the R.C.C. for use. In this connection we see no reason why the Churches should not also seek the co-operation of non-Christian leaders and agencies who likewise are interested in promoting civic consciousness through civic education.

(iii) Attempts should also be made to form a common fellowship of politically minded persons who could meet from time to time to discuss political problems and formulate views on them for the guidance of Christians actively engaged in political work or otherwise.

(iv) We also wish to recommend strongly the idea of establishing a Christian Institute of Public Affairs and suggest that the C.I.S.R.S. should either develop this institute as its own branch or take the initiative to bring it into existence as an independent body with regional branches.

(v) We further suggest that Christian intellectuals interested in public affairs in various state capitals and the national capital be requested to act as observers and to report on political and parliamentary trends and also utilise such opportunities as they might have of meeting the members of the legislature with a view to influence as far as possible policies and legislation with Christian insights.

(vi) Christians in India, we strongly feel, will be making a unique contribution to the political life of the country at this juncture if they took the initiative in establishing healthy political conventions among the existing political parties, such conventions as (*a*) an agreement not to exploit the student community for any kind of political purpose, (*b*) an agreement not to engage in any type of political action that will involve civil disobedience or direct action without previously exhausting the available modes of democratic procedure. To achieve this we suggest that either the N.C.C. or the 'Fellowship' mentioned above should take the initiative in inviting the leaders of various political groups and to persuade them to the adoption of such a body of conventions.

(vii) We suggest that the existing Christian papers should co-operate in the matter of publishing articles by Christian writers as well as reports of Christian consultations and conferences particularly in all the regional languages. In this connection we think that the time has come for the convening of a conference of journalists, managers and editors of Christian papers and periodicals for the purpose of working out effective ways and means of communicating Christian social and political opinion to the rank and file of the members of the Churches all over the country. Our desire for the political education of our fellow-Christians will continue to be severely limited if we fail to exploit adequately this vital medium of communication.

An Obstacle

We wish to record here what we regard as an obstacle in the way of Christians who are either actively engaged in politics or wish to participate in it but feel inhibited from doing so, *viz.*, the tendency among some Christians to suspect the motives and integrity of those who enter politics. This attitude is accompanied by pietism or idealism which condemn politics and are moralistic in that they see every decision in terms of absolute right and wrong. To counter the resulting loneliness of the Christian politician and to enable Christians to belong freely to a political party despite its shortcomings, it should be clearly understood that participation in political life is also a part of the Church's ministry. To help them in making political decisions, there is need for rediscovering the implications of Christian ethics. A partial solution may be found in small groups of Christians engaged in politics developing their own fellowships and their meeting with other Christians to discuss moral dilemmas inherent in politics.

Nasrapur Findings—II

CHRISTIAN PARTICIPATION IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT*

Introduction

We believe that Christ, who came that we might have life and have it more abundantly, calls us to love our neighbours as ourselves, and to serve their needs. God has created us as members of the human community, and as such we are commissioned to be responsible and loving members of society. It is God's own love for the world which joins the Church and world together, and calls the Church to serve man.

It is the Christian's duty to participate in building a new social and economic order in India, and thus to share in the creative action of God and to witness to the Lordship of Christ over human society. We Indian Christians are often preoccupied with our own needs. But we must resist the temptation to be communal, and must throw ourselves whole-heartedly into all truly nation-building activities.

The Old Patterns: Missions

The history of missions in India provides a background against which new patterns of Christian participation in economic life must be viewed. In response to Christ's commandment, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature", missions spread around the world. Missionary activities have tended to become institutionalised in the order of preaching, teaching, healing, and socio-economic help. Old patterns of economic service have been characterised by the understandable tendency for the emergent Church to be primarily concerned with its own economic strength and that of its economically weak and frequently dispossessed new members. The early economic activities were sporadic and characterised by the different emphases of individual missionaries. But there have been efforts to meet the wider needs of the entire communities such as those at Martandam and Allahabad and by India Village Service. These projects, though voluntary efforts, became the vanguard of the well-known pilot project at Etawah, U.P., in 1948–49.

Examples of early efforts are the technical training schools, orphanages, settlements, co-operatives, small-scale and cottage industries

* Findings of the Nasrapur Consultation, January 1960.

and other forms of aid meant primarily for helping Christians. Even so the economic programme of the Missions was regarded as peripheral and therefore it received less support than the educational and medical work. An unfortunate tendency was for those Christians who were trained with a view to their participation in the uplift of their villages to leave them and to settle in the towns and cities.

In more recent years the Churches have recognised that the poverty of the Christian community is too vast to relieve it with their own resources. In many parts of the country the Christian community forms a backward section and struggles under conditions largely identical with those of the scheduled castes from which they are mostly drawn. It is essentially landless, chiefly dependent on agricultural wage-labour in villages with a low and irregular income and a deplorable standard of living. Although a small section has migrated to the urban areas in search of industrial employment and a few others have been able to secure employment in Church, State, School and other services, the large majority still live under conditions of abject poverty, want and frustration. This situation is considerably aggravated by their political and social disabilities. Their economic welfare lies with State-wide measures to provide land for the landless, prevent eviction from homesteads, and to develop co-operatives of agricultural labourers, and with nation-wide plans to develop small-scale and large-scale industries which can create jobs and absorb the rural surplus. The Churches can help the Christian community by helping these State and National plans, and their implementation, and by seeking to remove existing obstacles to the full participation by Christians in them; and, where secular agencies are not doing the job, by developing the means whereby backward Christians along with backward non-Christians can take advantage of the provisions of the national development programmes. Thus, today, in the field of economic service, the Churches' concern for the Christian community and that for the wider community coalesce more than ever before.

The Churches all over the world are recognising that economic development is inherent in the Christian task. We are entering a new era in which Christians will undoubtedly participate much more broadly in the economic development of the nation as a whole. Early in the century many missions and Churches in India seeing the unity of human life and the totality of Divine Redemption, grasped the need for economic action. That enthusiasm waned and that opportunity was lost. The Tambaram Conference in 1938 emphasised the concern for the economic basis of the Church and human society, but no adequate machinery was created to implement this, due to the outbreak of the last war. We are again in a time of opportunity.

New Patterns: The Churches

The Government shows increasing awareness of the need for development plans to be built up from the village and other local levels. This will make democratic planning more real to the people and also enlist their co-operation in the projects. Churches and Church-related institutions and voluntary organisations can well augment the Government's efforts through initiating forums, study groups and seminars, and can thus play an effective role in educating the public regarding the opportunities in the Five-Year Plans. Educational institutions have a singular opportunity to pioneer in research and evaluation studies of various areas of development, such as co-operatives, panchayats, cottage industries and small-saving schemes. They may also give education in co-operation by organising co-operative societies on their campuses. The results of research must also be made available to the agencies serving men in need.

In a society with such a dearth of material possessions, it is also necessary to find alternative methods of establishing an individual's credit-worthiness. The possibility of the Christian congregation, or even smaller groups of Christians, providing such a method upon the basis of their mutual trust, should be explored.

In urban areas Christian labourers should be encouraged to share conscientiously in the life of Trade Unions not controlled by totalitarian parties. There is vast scope for vocational guidance, help in finding employment, small savings schemes, and in helping educated Christians in secular employment to understand both the nature of their vocation and their responsibility to the villages from which they have come.

Family planning is to be recognized and promoted as a means of improving the economic and spiritual welfare of the family. Population control is now a national policy. Christians can educate public opinion and provide facilities especially at Christian hospitals and clinics for advice to be given on family planning.

Service Institutions

There are several ways of relating the service institutions of the Church to the nation's economic development measures:

1. Mission and Church properties wherever lying idle should be put to productive use on some of the ways suggested above. In other words the concept of stewardship should be extended from the purely financial to all the Churches' material possessions.

In Kerala the Christian Consultation of 1957 has expressed its belief that the Churches should be in the vanguard of all progressive

measures and urged the Churches to express their readiness to bring the land owned by them under the scope of the proposed land legislation regarding fixity of tenure, and to enter into conversation with the Government regarding suitable provisions in the Bill for land ceilings and compensation of such a kind as to fulfil the just principles underlying the Bill and provide adequately for the religious and charitable institutions involved.

Fuller participation is called for on the part of Christians in such movements as Bharat Sevak Samaj, Bhoodan and Sarvodaya.

2. Several agricultural institutes of high standing have been working under Christian inspiration and Christian auspices, *e.g.*, Allahabad and Katpadi. They have continued to train Christians and non-Christians in improved methods of cultivation and engaged themselves in research in the different aspects of farming, rural sociology and community development. Both their training and extension work facilities need greater developments and perhaps also more orientation in relation to the national plan. The economic service agencies of the Churches should, for the benefit of those who possess land, give wider publicity regarding improved methods of cultivation and availability of sources of cheap credit, implements and seeds for agricultural purposes.

3. In the past, Missions, Churches, Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. have started centres for the development of cottage and small-scale industries in the villages. These centres have great opportunities if they are reoriented to carry their work on inter-denominational lines, with a total programme for the village community, within the context of national extension and community development programmes and utilising all government facilities of technical aid and financial assistance. There is need (1) to improve technical methods available to village craftsman and leaders in their problems regarding crafts, raw materials, marketing and finance; (2) to co-ordinate existing resources in men, money and efforts ; (3) to evolve schemes for Training Institutions in village economics on an inter-church basis; (4) to develop co-operative societies and institutions for getting grants and loans for village industries and improving quality and marketing facilities; and (5) to provide panchayat training and co-operative and extension services.

The Churches may start pilot projects of village economic development employing new types of machines which can use electricity. It may be mentioned that the Church of South India has worked out such a scheme.

The Christian Community in the past has been a pioneer in the field of medicine and education. It is now prudent on our part to seek

new avenues of expansion, service and consolidation as a community. The field of encouraging the spread of the knowledge of technical skills is open to us. Polytechnics may therefore be started under Christian auspices. Funds could be secured for this project both from our own Government and foreign Foundations. This is extremely urgent.

It would be necessary to undertake a survey of existing technical and industrial centres under the Churches in order to encourage their expansion for better production and employment.

For advanced technical training, more Christian young men may be sent abroad, particularly when a large number of facilities are available.

4. The Churches may also enter the field of literary and technical education for the new migrants to the cities. They may very well start with their own people who are very often lost to the Church today in their transit from the village to the city. Labour Relations Institutes such as that in Jamshedpur, started by the Roman Catholic Church for the purpose of providing better Labour Management relationships and training of Trade Union leaders are a necessary line of Christian advance into the area of industrial society. It is gratifying to note that the United Church of Northern India has already appointed an industrial pastor in Kanpur.

5. As a measure to increase educated employment, it is important to devise means to counsel the students and parents on the selection of subjects of specialisation and provide vocational guidance at the High School level wherever possible. Churches may start such agencies for vocational counselling and guidance at least for its own members. The Y.M.C.A. has made a start along these lines in certain cities of India for the larger community.

6. An employment bureau may be brought into existence in every city to help secure jobs for young Christians.

7. The Economic Life Committee of the national and regional Christian Councils as well as Churches have large tasks in the field of economic service, to work not only for the uplift of the Christian community but also for the larger community.

There should be an agency in some form related to the N.C.C. to keep the Church fully informed about Government economic plans and the scope for its participation in the nation's development.

As Christians we have a special responsibility for personal honesty, hard work, self-sacrifice and social action for the eradication of corruption, nepotism, tax-evasion and so on, all of which are hindering national progress.

Honesty and integrity should characterise Christians engaged in production and business. In this connection the Churches have a responsibility towards Christians in business. The Church has a similar duty to the Christian in Government service, and young people should aspire to Government posts motivated by a desire to serve.

Many Churches are taking up the programme of training for a wider ministry of the Christian congregation. But because of the urgency of the situation, in-service training should be given to those ministers who have not had the new orientation. Associate pastors, deacons and lay specialists responsible for economic and social service may well be considered.

Nasrapur Findings—III

NEW PATTERNS OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL WITNESS IN INDIA*

THE changing structures of Indian Society make it necessary for the Church and Christians to evaluate such patterns of participation in the building up of the social life of the nation as have been used in the past and also to evolve new patterns more suitable to the changing conditions of the present.

THE FAMILY

Introduction.—A review of the part played by Christianity in the remoulding, strengthening and enriching of family life in the nation would show that much of the influence in this sphere in the past has been unconscious and indirect. The new values introduced into Christian family life such as the worth of the personality of the woman as a human person in her own rights and the principles of monogamy and of marriage by consent at an age when consent can be meaningful which are basic to Christian marriage have eventually commended themselves to the community of the nation partly through education and partly through example. In this way nuclear family has been strengthened as an integral unit in itself. Actually this process has been carried so far that one wonders whether in certain areas such as cities perhaps the Christian family has become too keenly conscious of itself as an economic unit to have any responsibility for near relations.

The migration of families or members of them from village to town or from one town to another, changes in the pattern of the support of the family and provision for its future, conditions of education for children, new transport facilities and a host of other factors have radically changed the environment of family life all over the country and considerably affected the structure of the family, too. The old joint-family is in decline and the nuclear family has come to stay in both town and village. The changes that have taken place have been such as to thrust greater responsibility on the man and his wife for personal decisions regarding the planning and management of the family and its affairs and the bringing up of the children. These have also incidentally created, particularly in the cities, problems of isolation and leisure.

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* Findings of the Nasrapur Consultation, January 1960.

The complexity of life in the new environment for the family may be said to have emphasised the great need and created a wide scope for the expression of Christian love. But the Church is not the only body that is concerned for the welfare of the family as the smallest and yet the most significant unit of the nation. The Government of the country is committed to the goal of a welfare state and partly functions as one. Hence it has set up and invites voluntary organisations to create institutions for giving help to families as such. It needs no arguments, we hope, to declare that the Church should welcome this opportunity for service, and should both co-operate with the Government and non-Christian voluntary associations in areas where they are engaged in service, and run its own services in those large areas which have been left uncovered by the latter.

Counselling.—The social concerns of the Church for the family in India may be broadly comprehended under objectives for the Christian Home Movement. Without insisting on separateness of organisation for the Movement everywhere, its objectives may be implemented through its own branches or other Christian organizations like the Mothers' Union and Women's Fellowship, especially by inducing the latter to open wings for programmes for parents as such. The main responsibility of such organizations would be general education on family problems for all and counselling for those about to be married, parents eager to plan their families and all others who may wish to be helped in the problems that arise within a family situation. In view of the seriousness of the problem of population in India special clinics may also be started for advice on family planning.

Counselling, however, is a delicate job and it asks for qualities, skill and knowledge which people do not easily come by without training. At the same time it is to be remembered that it would be thoroughly impractical and unimaginative to recommend a panel of experts for every village or parish. Fortunately the problems confronted by most of the parishioners are of a general nature and are such that men and women with a sound general education and some special training in the methods of counselling will be able to deal with. Pastors and their wives, doctors, teachers and temperamentally suited members of the congregation are the most obvious persons to think of employing in spite of the slight embarrassment of counselling to people with whom they might be on terms of familiarity. Selected men and women including pastors ought to be enabled to receive the necessary training at special centres established throughout the country, at, we suggest, the initiative of the N.C.C. Such training may also be made available at the theological colleges. The period of training would have to be short, it may be continued in a sense indefinitely through the supply of relevant

literature, such as is available from the Christian Medical Association and the C.I.S.R.S. Government publications, too, on these matters may be supplied to them by the Church.

While counselling by individuals or small groups is important, there is need for every Christian congregation, as such, to give individuals an experience of integration in a community and counteract the feeling of loneliness and emotional frustration and self-pity.

Helps in Daily Life.—Apart from counselling, Christians have a responsibility for offering help in the day-to-day life of people living in families. To help working mothers with babies, nurseries and creches may be run and where such facilities are provided by other organizations, such as the Bharat Sevak Samaj people may be helped to take advantage of the provision. In cities such work may be undertaken by the Y.W.C.A. with the co-operation of the city council of Churches.

Problems of health and family budgeting are closely linked with ignorance regarding principles of dietetics and nutrition. The women's organisations can carry on propaganda for dietetics through special literature, lectures and cooking demonstrations.

Both in towns and villages the Church may help its own members and the larger community living around the Church building by offering it as a place of study and homework for boys and girls living in homes where any study is impossible for reasons of bad lighting and lack of room. Arrangements might also be made for giving help in such study to the children by enlisting the voluntary services of men and women who might come forward to make a regular donation of their time for such a form of social service. Besides being a means of helping the families it would provide significant contacts with non-Christian families in the locality.

The Church could also deal with the problems of special groups which tend to become separated from, or to be felt as a burden on, the family. The aged and retired people no longer able to earn a livelihood can often receive neither the care nor support their children or other relatives might wish to give them if they could. By starting homes for aged people the Church could not only provide shelter and food to them but make use of their experience and abilities for counselling or other forms of service and in this way relieve them of the depressing feeling of not being wanted any longer. Women who remain unmarried in order to support a family or for other reasons should be made to feel that they are deserving of special respect and should be provided opportunities of recreation and companionship. We view with concern the continuance of the highly discriminatory attitude regarding sex-relations based on a double standard of morality, which is not only

inhibitive of a sympathetic understanding of the unmarried mothers in their peculiar predicament, but also leads to social ostracism and the denial of Church fellowship. Education of social opinion and the cultivation of sympathetic attitude, we think, is an important step in overcoming these traditional prejudices.

The persistence of the institution of dowry among Christians and its deterioration has given rise to serious social and economic problems, *e.g.*, enforcing women to remain unmarried and enfeebling the economy of the middle income group, and driving the lower classes into debt. This is a matter of grave practical concern. The Church and other Christian organisations should carry out a systematic propaganda for the eradication of this undesirable social practice by buiilding up a strong public opinion against it within the Christian community. In this connection the new Bill prohibiting dowry is worthy of active support by the Church and the community at large.

Much of the service along new lines would be directed towards the members of the Churches themselves to build up in the first place the Christian family as an inspiring and leavening prototype. To this end it is also necessary for the Church to have an all-round, family-centred education programme calculated to strengthen the home. Such a programme would be concerned with different age-groups and the different aspects of life in the family. One aspect of it would be a healthy development of responsible behaviour between boys and girls which would help them on occasions in later life when they might have to face social dangers. Such a sound education would also help to keep down the number of broken homes and marriages of Christians with partners of another faith. More positively it would give back to the Church much greater strength, both in the energy of devoted service and cheerful offerings of money.

The Church and its related associations would, however, not limit their service and attention to Christian homes. On the contrary, not only would these amenities be gladly offered to any non-Christian families which might wish to take advantage of them, but special efforts would be made to commend them to the latter through exhibitions, dramas, social gatherings, neighbourly visiting and friendly chats.

Community in Rural and Urban Areas

Introduction.—The Church in India today is faced with new problems and new opportunities in the field of social service and reconstruction activities. The Church is no longer the pioneer in many types of humanistic and creative work. Some of the national secular movements and non-Christian religious movements have mobilised their resources in directing the nation along creative lines. It is time that

Christians realised more fully, that as Lord of the Universe, Jesus Christ is active not only in the Church but also in the world for the fulfilment of His purpose.

While the Church may still be called upon to undertake work in hitherto unexplored fields, it seems evident that, by and large, the social responsibility of the Church at the present time is to participate in the ongoing movements of national development in India. This is a new era of planning within the Welfare State. Such a new situation may involve a withdrawal from certain old and familiar fields of activity, at any rate a repatterning of old and familiar forms of service. This should be regarded not as a retreat or a defeat but as the beginning of an advance into new fields and new forms of service.

In the changing situation there is need for a continuing reappraisal with regard to each Christian institution of its usefulness in relation to the Church and to the nation. Many of the Church-owned educational institutions and welfare service agencies may have to make a decision to accept a greater measure of State control over them or to stop them. It may be better that several of them be handed over to the State, as it takes major responsibility in fields in which the Church pioneered. In fact the Church now may utilise its resources in other directions. However, even in old fields, some Christian institutions have a role as places of experiment and example in developing new Christ-informed patterns relevant to contemporary India. These and other institutions as well, particularly in the educational field, may be kept under Christian management to conserve varied patterns which, just like the private and public sectors of industry, are important for the survival and development of the ideal and fulfilment of a pluralistic society.

One reason why the Church would still like to hold on to schools and colleges is because these institutions are concerned with the basic needs and values of human personality. But this imposes greater responsibility than ever for the schools and colleges to hold up the ideals of the pursuit of truth and building up of true community.

And, if at any time, these institutions should be taken over by the State, the Church would do well to seek to supplement and provide a determining dimension to the education imparted in schools by running hostels or youth centres for students, both Christian and non-Christian. But the most significant Christian contribution can be made to education, both now and in the future, only by the conscientious and devoted service of teachers and their inspiring example in class-room and community. And this responsibility, along with that of Christian educationists responsible for framing syllabi and deciding policies in various

educational bodies set up by governmental or quasi-governmental authorities, is one that will only gain in importance if and when the schools now under the management of the Churches should pass beyond their control.

Institutional Resources of Service.—The Church has great potentialities for social witness in the new setting through already established Christian service agencies. Educational institutions, hospitals, youth movements and *ashrams* have been continuously expressing the Christian concern for men and society through various programmes of social service. And in the new setting, the contribution they can make to the national task of integrating men, women and children into a social structure suitable to their personal development and social fulfilment, can be no less significant.

Organisations like the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. have been serving Christian and non-Christian intelligentsia and middle classes educating them in new social values and training them in social work. They have extended their services by making their membership more broadbased in recent years. Through social institutions like the Madras Boys' Town and Social Service and Community settlements, personal counselling bureaus, etc., they have also sought to express their concern for their more unfortunate brethren. The Y.M.C.A. working class projects in Nagpur, Bangalore and Kanpur are worthy of note. They need to become aware of the need for new kinds of professional training suited to the requirements of industrialisation both in rural and urban environments, such as training in labour welfare and industrial management as well as technological training; and they may take the initiative as was done by Y.W.C.A. in the case of the Delhi School of Social Work.

Following the recommendations of the Lindsay Commission on Christian Higher Education in India, some Christian colleges conducted social surveys of crucial social problems, for example the Wilson College made a survey of the housing problem of Bombay, and the Ewing College of the condition of the Christian community in Allahabad and the Hislop College of the living conditions of students in Nagpur. Christian schools, colleges and other institutions of learning may continue to render equally useful service in relation to the programme of social development of independent India. There is great need for social investigation before any intelligent social action can be taken. In this connection it is gratifying that several Christian colleges in North India have pioneered in starting departments of sociology. These departments can make a special contribution in social investigation. Other colleges too can help by training their students especially of the social sciences to assess the new social forces properly. Extension, research and service in villages and cities, such as the study of special problems

of rural and/or urban areas, and various forms of adult education are of great value in the national programme of community development. Christian students may channel their social concern through social programmes under the auspices of the S.C.M., College Social Service League, etc. Mention may be made in this connection to the night schools for labourers which several Christian colleges have been conducting for city labourers for the last several years. A great deal of attention needs to be given to the problems of community in the Christian educational institutions themselves. The teachers, students, administrators, workers, cooks, scavengers, hostel boys and a host of others need to be brought into a social structure capable of fostering disciplined freedom under true authority, and infusing community sentiment and spirit of mutual aid and service. Indeed, the Christian educational institutions have a tradition of community life; in future also it may still turn out to be their single greatest contribution to the community development in the larger nation.

Apart from undertaking surveys, youth groups, particularly the Y.W.C.A., Y.M.C.A., S.C.M. and Church Youth Leagues would find avenues of service in the care or instruction of juvenile delinquents, waifs, and adult illiterates. But any programme they have should be planned with vision and executed with steadfastness and faith in God.

The Church has in the past been the pioneer in the education and care of the physically and mentally handicapped. The Church will continue to render this service since these classes of handicapped persons may be the last to be adequately provided for by the State or other organizations.

Several groups of Christians have been carrying on experiments in basic education most successfully. They need the fullest support of both Churches and private Christian bodies. Without such support, they have had to rely on Government patronage with the result the experiment has suffered seriously in its implementation. At the same time, there is room for groups to make a unique contribution both independently as well as within the Government scheme. In fact Christian Basic Schools and Basic Training Schools have been recognized by the Government as being particularly successful. Christian educational agencies may also take the lead in developing a pattern of Basic Education in the industrialised urban and suburban areas.

In view of the perplexity and divergence of opinion among Christians themselves about the meaning of religious freedom in institutions it is desirable that there should be an all-India consultation of educationists and Church leaders to discuss the matter and give guidance

which will enable Churches and Christian managements to adopt a clear policy.

Apart from its religious basis and social philosophy which need to be criticised in many respects from the Christian angle, Sarvodaya has developed swadeshi techniques and programmes of rural service; and Christian ashrams and the other social agencies involved in rural development activities have opportunities of experimenting with them. Evangelistic, medical and economic welfare work can be done in the Sarvodaya pattern. Thus there is need for more Christian Sarvodaya experiments. In this connection it will be necessary for Christian rural agencies to enter into conversation with Sarvodaya with a view to develop creative patterns of co-operation with it, more especially in the areas of Basic Education, Gramdan, and Village Industries. Christian-non-Christian co-operation in service can only be on the basis of integrity in devotion to Truth. Therefore religious problems involved in it should be faced and not shirked.

New Projects.—A Three-Year Plan for Christian Advance Service in Industrial Areas adopted by a Conference on Industrial Christian Service held in Rajpur, Dehra Dun, in 1959 asks Churches and Christian agencies (1) to prepare a map of the industrial areas of India and survey the trends of population growth, industrial development, Christian migration and the main needs which the Churches may seek to meet in relation to them; (2) to give special attention to the development of hostels, social and recreational centres and vocational guidance; (3) to do research regarding vocabulary and terminology understood by industrial workers and prepare and circulate a bibliography for information; and (4) to further adult literacy and educational programme through literacy and literature production.

In the present context of rapid urbanisation and industrialisation, the Churches should pioneer with new institutional patterns in industrial urban areas. Some like the following may open new avenues of Christian service: (1) Christian ashrams and communities in city slums. (2) Social Service Centres, such as the Nagpada Community House in Bombay initiated by the American Marathi Mission. (3) Institutes for the development of better Labour-Management relationships and training of Labour Union leaders and for the literary and technical education for the working classes. Inspiration and guidance for advance in this field may be found in the work done by for instance Missions de France, the Iona Commumunity in Scotland, the Anglican Industrial Mission in Sheffield, and the Fransiscans in London.

The Role of the Laity.—Development of new programmes of service for traditional Christian service agencies and of new institutional

patterns more adequate to the new needs of community development requires the active co-operation of informed laymen. It is mainly the duty of laymen already involved in the different areas of national and social life to help the Church find those forms for expressing its social concern, which are suitable to the present demands. The Church and Christian agencies have not fully tapped the resources of expert knowledge and experience of Christian laymen in the field of social enquiry and programmes of action. If the Christian agencies are to help the nation in its search for a new social structure, they should be able to relate the Christian understanding of man and society to the technical realities of social change. For instance, in the task of bringing an awareness of the local industrial situation and its needs to Churches and their members and in formulating a Christian programme to meet those needs, the co-operation of representatives of management and labour is essential. Active co-operation of several groups including leaders of the Church, Christian service organisations and institutions, academic theologians, pastors of congregations, teachers of the social sciences, social research workers, practical men of experience in social service and leaders of public life, is required if the Church in India has to develop new creative patterns of Christian service in new India.

It is not only for the sake of the Church and the development of more suitable Christian institutions of social service that the Church wants its laymen. In fact, laymen are the Church out in the secular world. The most effective form of the Church's service to the nation is through the individual laymen who are working in the several community service agencies under Government, non-Christian or secular auspices. Perhaps under conditions of the present with the State taking over the major responsibility for social development and non-Christian religious and secular agencies entering the field of community service with much larger resources than the Christian Church can afford, the Church should put more emphasis on the social witness of laymen scattered in areas of national development than on that of agencies directly under Christian management. The Church has not always provided the necessary fellowship of prayer and thought to Christian individuals dispersed in the secular life of society or helped them to fulfil their secular tasks as a Christian vocation of significance related to the Church's message of redemption of the world in Christ. " The Church must form the laymen; and the laymen must transform the world." Means should be found to provide the laymen with a certain measure of teaching in the fundamentals of the Christian faith, and acquaint them with the Christian social thinking in the past tradition of the Church and in the World Council of Churches. Both the Church and

the nation would be greatly benefited if laymen became conscious of their Christian vocation in society.

The Christian who worships in the local congregation is also a voter, a member of a trade union or a chamber of commerce. He is a citizen as well as churchman and is called to relate the insights that he receives in worship, the love that is Christ formed in him, to the secular world in which he has to live. This Christian service will not be institutionally protected and needs no such protection; but it will be a true social witness. The Christian teacher or doctor in a State institution will escape from loneliness into fellowship with those in whom there lives the spirit of Christ so that "where two or three are gathered together" fellowship (*koinonia*) and service (*diakonia*) will rediscover one another. A handful of Christians, meeting together for prayer or discussion in the tiffin house during a factory-break on a week-day, will prove to be a sort of "local congregation" in the factory, and the Church will flourish in a multitude of tiny cells within the fabric of secular society. It will also lead to a new understanding of *kerygma*, not only as a message of salvation for the individual but also as salvation for the whole of society, not as sermons but the gospel proclaimed by the layman in and through his work. The service of the Church will be directed to the layman who works in the world. This will demand new types of piety, worship, and devotion as well as new dynamic relationships with non-Christian associates in the common tasks of social life.

The ministry of the laity in the world is a real dimension of the social mission of the Church which the Churches all the world over are beginning to become aware. It may call for radical reformulation of the structure of Christian congregational life as well as its corporate worship, pastoral and teaching ministries, and ordained priesthood.

Since the strong conviction is now growing in the Church that informed and committed participation by laymen in the so-called secular areas of profession and civic life is the most significant factor for transforming society in Christ, we should urge laymen and women to equip themselves with the Christian insights for their various avocations and consciously to plan out Christian witness in their work both as individuals and groups. The Church has a new and a great responsibility to arouse consciousness in its members of a mission through vocation and also to arrange for institutes and seminars for the enlightenment of all classes of workers, intellectual and manual. A study should also be made of creative programmes along those lines in other countries such as industrial evangelism in Japan.

The Common Life of the Church

There is a positive relation between the secular idea of community and the idea of the *koinonia* of the Christian Church. Therefore the Church's understanding of itself as a community and its expression in its common life are of tremendous importance to the national projects of social development both in rural and urban areas.

The acknowledgement of Christ's universal Lordship and His call to witness to that Lordship in all the world is the foundation of the common life of the Church. The Church and its local manifestation, the Christian congregation, share the sociological features of the natural social structures in which they live. The Christian community, the local congregation, may be looked upon as a group, a social unit in relation to other social units, but it is certainly more than that because its purpose is not to live to itself, but to bring every man, every institution, every section of society, culture and every part of life to respond to the purpose of God for the world as revealed in Jesus Christ and to acknowledge His Lordship. Thus the community of the Church, the local congregation, is the place where all streams and structures of life meet and are vitalised by the dynamic power of Christ. It is an open fellowship and not exclusive like a communal or caste group. This needs special emphasis in India.

The fellowship in Christ is never realised in its fullness by any congregation. But its realisation according to the measure of its faith provides the criteria to judge whether the principles and practices in the varied realms of social life are in accordance with the Christian understanding of the ultimate nature of society as fellowship. It is also a source of social renewal. The Christian congregation in any city or village therefore has a responsibility for the total community—basti, chawl, mohalla, cheri or village—within which it is placed. This responsibility includes not only a concern of each person to God, but also a duty to help transform all human relations so that they may more adequately reflect the purposes of God.

In the city, the task of getting all believers in a locality together for worship faces two problems. First the multiplicity of Christian denominations. This is more real in the city than in the village. In the large cities, where people are found to be settled from all over the country, and from various areas of mission work, denominational loyalties cause division in the total urban Christian community. Even apart from the question of Church unity, Churches in India should be able to co-operate to make every Church in the city a centre of united Christian worship, fellowship, evangelism and education. Inasmuch as the people of a new industrial area desire to have a Union Church,

denominational churches should desist from operating separately. The second is the problem of sectarian tendencies. Christian people tend to break away from the local Church in order to form independent sects or to associate with one or other of the many sectarian bodies which are already established. These sects inculcate a religious attitude which emphasises spirituality at the expense of facing the practical problems of urban society; this leads to a separation of the Christian from those outside the sect which not only stultifies the Church's function of bringing the love of Christ to bear upon urban society, but also gives rise to unhealthy and undesirable Christian communalism. However at two levels, the sects challenge the local Church. (1) The sect has a fervent sense of fellowship at worship and afterwards; it gives to its members a deep sense of belonging and status, opportunities for self-expression; and it satisfies men's need for spiritual authority. Some of these are answers to real human problems, but on a false basis. But they point to the need of the worshipping congregation of the local Church becoming more real as a fellowship of the Holy Spirit. (2) The sect is a justifiable reaction against much of the goody-goody moralism which passes off in many middle class Churches in the urban areas as Christianity and has no dynamic of spiritual transformation.

Positive Expressions of Fellowship

The spirit of Christian fellowship cannot end with the place of worship or the life of the Church. It should make its impact on the social life of believers, that is, as they live within the social institutions. It is not only as a group gathered in the Church for worship and Church Meeting but also scattered within the social structure in village or city that Christians of a locality should seek to reflect the transforming power of Christian fellowship. When the nation is engaged in the task of building communities which can do justice to the new sense of freedom and equality among the people, questions of new social goals and the moral basis of individuality are raised in an acute form; and the social life of the Christian community has a significant contribution to make in providing the right answers. Especially the local congregation has vital but largely untapped resources for the development of a new sense of common life in India.

Caste, casteism and communalism as well as class and class rigidity exist in the Christian community in large measure. The Indian Christians are to a great extent still conditioned in their social life by certain traditional cultural patterns of thought and living or alternatively swept off by some of the modern currents of thought and life from the West. Both of them contain elements contrary to the Christian faith, and inimical to the Christian fellowship. Within the Church, there is

in general a failure to understand the social implications of the Christian claim that all are one in Christ and to act in the power of the Spirit. The deep significance of this claim and the implications of the doctrine of the Church as the Body of Christ in which every member is integrally connected, have not as yet been seriously faced by the Indian Christian.

The family is the stronghold of caste-structure and will be the last to give up caste-attitudes. Therefore naturally the idea and practice of Christian fellowship have affected the caste-practices associated with marriage and family least. In the matter of selecting partners for young men and women, caste consideration has a powerful hold in many Christian homes, perhaps due largely to the attitude of parents or grand parents. In some Christian homes, with regard to matters such as employment of servants and mixing together of children of different families, caste prejudices are allowed to play a dominant role. Further, in the religious and social functions connected with Christening, betrothal, marriage, etc., caste discriminations are made by several Christian homes. Such occasions, on the other hand, may be effectively used as opportunities for the demonstration of Christian fellowship which transcends caste. Since the observance of caste is more at the level of the family than at that of the individual, we should particularly exhort the Christian Home Movement and other associations concerned with family life to evolve programmes for encouraging interdining, mutual visiting and common holiday homes for families of different castes.

The Church in the past has sought to provide spiritual home to those who "lost caste" for the sake of their Christian religious convictions. Today, there is need for the Church to declare clearly that members of the Church who make personal and social decisions which cut across caste boundaries will have the special supporting fellowship of the Church. In fact, practical demonstration of the Church's support to Christian people who face social isolation through intercaste marriages or other decisions affecting caste exclusiveness is very urgently needed today.

The relation between rural and urban Churches deserves special consideration as a social problem. Great disparity exists in the intellectual and social levels between them and serious attempts should be made to reduce it. The Christian fellowship should express itself in the urban Christians taking practical measures for the improvement of the rural Christians. There is one other point where the urban congregation must become socially alive. The urban congregation must face up to the implications of its task of welcoming into their fellowship and ministering to the migrant village Christians who move into the city in search of employment and economic betterment. Such

Christians are generally always illiterate or of low educational standards. Frequently such Christians fail to establish contact with the urban Church and get lost in the urban crowd. There is a need for much more effectively functioning channels of information between Churches regarding movements of Church members. One reason for the indifference and lack of participation on the part of Christian immigrants in city Churches is that these Churches are mostly middle class in outlook. The Church must go where the people are, both physically and emotionally. The integration of Christian immigrant labour into the life of the urban congregation both at the religious and at the social levels is a matter that the Church in India should not long evade. It is a social concern of the Church understood as a Christian fellowship.

Changes in the Structure of the Church

The pastorate of the urban Church requires new training. Persons with particular suitability must be found and trained to be pastors in the urban industrial population centres. A commendable beginning has been made by the United Church of Northern India through a pilot industrial pastorate in Kanpur. Special training may be given in the theological colleges as well as through contact with industrial situations. Efforts may be made to equip suitable laymen with knowledge and experience to meet the pastoral difficulties peculiar to urban and industrial communities.

The C.S.I. has begun to experiment with voluntary ordained clergy in the rural congregations. They live by their secular avocations but have the responsibility of pastoral care and of regular leadership in the congregation in worship and Holy Communion. Perhaps an extension of this idea to the urban pastorate may turn out to be very useful. The clergymen who come from a non-industrial milieu are seldom acceptable to labourers, Christian or non-Christian. Appointment of chaplains and other religious workers in factories, shipyards, hospitals and other places is a necessary line of advance provided these chaplains realise that they are there to work with and train a group of workers involved in the situation to discharge the Church's pastoral, evangelistic, and other responsibilities. Only laymen who are labourers seem able to communicate well with labourers whether Christians or non-Christians.

In cities, experiments may be made to express the common life of the Church in the places where people live by the organisation of House Churches. The House Church is a method of expressing the fellowship of the Church in local areas. Christian neighbours meet in one another's houses at regular intervals for social intercourse, Bible study and discussion, intercession, and social action. Such small groups enable the fellowship to become real; intercession is for people by name

known to the members of the group, living in the neighbourhood itself. House Churches are under the supervision of ministers though lay-leaders may be given responsibility for their actual running. Where such groups can work interdenominationally this is desirable. Where House Churches are organised, it is necessary to seek the co-operation of ministers related to the area, so that they do not drift apart from the organisation of the Church as a whole. The House Church should not be confused with the Cottage Prayer Meeting, where the emphasis is exclusively on prayer, and which is usually confined to one denomination.

There is a need to examine the organisational and administrative structure of the Church from the point of view of the fulfilment of her purpose in the rural and the urban societies. The large number of committees and their cumbersome processes, both in the congregation and the denomination, hinder the Church's task. There appears to be a considerable amount of overlapping which is resulting in a vast waste of time and energy on the part both of laymen and ministers. This is an urgent matter, for the internal administration of the Church is absorbing attention which should be given to the Church's fulfilling of her purpose inside the fellowship, and in the community. This is a complex problem which requires the accumulation of much data, and a considerable amount of study.

Over-centralisation and rigidity of structure foster a mentality of expecting local church life to be regulated by central administration and committees, sap initiative for congregational action and, worst of all, stand in their way of taking themselves seriously as the Church of God in the town or the village, not merely called to common worship therein but to be a community to carry out God's mission to the people among whom they are placed. A greater trust of congregations and a larger opportunity for the Holy Spirit to work through community rather than committees would mean appreciable decentralisation, greater responsibility for the laity in making up the missionary programme of the local Church and, if one may put it so, less of ecclesiastical red-tape.

Whatever the changes in the structure of the congregation the pastor has the vital function of building up the fellowship of the congregation to exercise Christ's ministry in the world. While it is desirable for the wives of pastors to give full support to their husbands, it would be unwise to insist that pastors' wives shall do this or that in the Church or that they shall not work for a living. There is great deal to be said for revising the salary structure for the ministry so that the pastors' wives may not have to work for supplementing the husband's salaries.

In the past women have been all but completely denied a place in the management or the planning of the affairs of the Church. The time has come for them to take an equal share of responsibility in the Church with the men.

A last word may be added on the overlapping work and concerns of the Church and inter-church bodies on a provincial or national level. As in the case of the Christian Home Movement, Youth Work and rural uplift work, the provisions made by bodies like the N.C.C. are more relevant in some areas than in others because in the latter there are often existing organisations with the same objectives. It would therefore be more advisable for bodies like the N.C.C. to pass on ideas, suggestions, and inspiration to the Churches and to undertake the work of co-ordination only than to start subsidiary organisations all down the line.

Nasrapur Findings—IV

CHRISTIANS AND THE CULTURAL FOUNDATION OF NEW INDIA*

Introduction

For our present purpose culture can be described in two ways. Firstly, as social culture which is the complex of social behaviour, manners and customs. This includes all forms of folk-art, much of which is being revived today. Secondly, as the conscious creation of civilised man. This includes the configuration of religious forms and ideas, the products of intellectual labour, and the creations of man's æsthetic sensibility. However, there is no clear line of demarcation between these two. For, in one sense the creations of conscious effort arise out of social reality, while in another, they, in turn, affect social process.

Culture cannot be spoken of in absolute terms: it is a relative concept. Also, culture is not static: it is dynamic and developing. This is clearly seen in the diversity and fluidity of our culture. Consequently it could be maintained that there is no such thing as an Indian culture. Nevertheless, in and through the diversity of our culture, there is a recognizable unity and continuity. For this reason we can also legitimately speak of an Indian culture, an outstanding characteristic of which is to evolve by assimilation.

Social Culture

Apart from this identifiable and distinctive Indian culture at the folk level, there is now found in India a way of life characteristic of a universal technological civilization. This way of life is producing some revolutionary changes in values, not only among the intelligentsia, but also in the lives of the common folk. Technological civilisation is basically the product of modern science. Although it is true that science and technology have developed in the West, there is a universality about them that cannot be denied. Hence a world view derived from science and technology is emerging. Involvement in the technological changes in India has meant for our people an experience of liberation both spiritual and material, which is not always consciously understood. For the educated man and woman it implies a freedom from the hold of caste structure and traditional restrictions; it has given the labourer

* Findings of the Nasrapur Consultation, January 1960.

and the peasant a similar freedom from oppression and inequality. The poorer classes find a sense of liberation from age-old bonds of custom, in such forms of self-expression as leads to new ways of dress and amusement.

While we welcome this effect of modern technology upon our traditional way of life, it brings with it also elements that are harmful, for example the indiscriminate acceptance of new social values which come through the cinema and other media, some of which are spurious. We need therefore to look for categories to evaluate these new social values. There is further the problem of the co-existence in juxtaposition of a scientific world-view in some areas of life with the traditional world-view in other areas of life, without any integration whatsoever.

Culture as Conscious Creation

In the main, culture, from this point of view, can be conveniently dealt with under three different heads: the religious, the intellectual and the æsthetic.

The Religious.—Although we include religion under culture we recognize that there is an essential dimension of religion that transcends culture, both as social forms and as conscious creation. It would be a mistake to treat religion exclusively from the point of view of culture. Some national leaders, however, assume that a common culture can be evolved through common worship. This assumption goes counter to the meaning of worship which in our understanding is an end in itself and not a means to an end. Christians cannot consent to make use of religion to forge a cultural unity, nor is religious unity a prerequisite for cultural unity.

It may be possible for individual Christians to participate in religious celebrations of a social significance such as some public festivals and domestic ceremonies provided the integrity of religious conviction can be preserved. *e.g.*: Divali and Onam. In this spirit Christians should feel free to accept invitations to non-Christian celebrations and to invite their non-Christian friends on similar occasions. Some Hindu customs have already lost any precise religious significance, while some customs, originally Hindu, are being adopted as national customs. All traditional customs need not be considered as unacceptable to the Christian. With discrimination it may be possible for Christians to use some customs such as the Kolam or Rangoli or Alpana to decorate their homes, or the lighting of lamps or the breaking of cocoanuts (as is done in launching ships) merely as a cultural symbol.

In any case Christians have a spiritual duty because of their faith to have deep reverence for humanity and the ways in which sections of

humanity have expressed themselves religiously. Thus it is their duty to have respect for the deepest religious aspirations and experiences of non-Christians which have sustained them and are sustaining them through their lives.

The Intellectual.—At the present time very few Christians are making any serious study of Indian philosophy, history and social thought. Many of us are not aware of our intellectual heritage. We are apathetic toward the content of the traditional as well as contemporary intellectual life of the country. Since most of us are not adequately informed, we are not able to contribute our share to the thinking in these spheres. While we should foster learning and thought on Western lines, we should at the same time become profoundly acquainted with the language of classical discourse and the terms and categories of traditional thought.

Christian scholars and thinkers should be able to contribute to the intellectual life of the nation by research, exposition of existing works, interpretation and creative writing. It must be acknowledged that the Church in India has been apathetic to intellectual expression of Christian life and of Christian participation in the life of the world. There has been a marked tendency to adopt pietistic attitudes and to be satisfied with them.

We may claim that our knowledge of the political scene is more adequate. In this sphere we may influence the climate of thought more effectively. A great deal remains to be done here to make the whole community aware of the issues involved, so that the weight of public opinion may be channelled towards constructive goals. In this matter the Christian leaders should take initiative and give an impetus to the Christian people, as a whole. They are to make possible dialogue between the conflicting ideologies that are prevalent in the country. Christian journalism should be developed to exercise this responsibility. Educational institutions as well as the Churches should undertake and sponsor studies in this direction. And wherever possible in our task of interpretation we must be ready to discern the work of Christ as much in the secular and materialistic movements as in the specifically religious. It is only such studies for instance that will make Christians aware of all the implications of the secular state. The widespread secular outlook in India is essentially influenced by a non-religious humanism. Nevertheless we must recognize that since secularism is not a total philosophy, those who take a secular attitude to the political aspects of the national life may at the same time be governed by another philosophy which may be either religious or materialistic. It is for this reason that in practice the secular state manifests certain contradictory

traits. It is also our task as Christians to define the true nature of the secular state and to call the attention of the national bodies to the lapses in the practice of the ideal as occasions arise.

The Aesthetic.—The Indian Christian is criticised for taking little interest having made little contribution to literature and fine arts. This is in the main true. Yet we are thankful for Christian pioneers in literature, music, painting and architecture who have made noteworthy contributions. The poems of N. V. Tilak, Vedanayaga Sastriar, Krishna Pillai, Guram Joshua, Kahanji Madhavji Ratnagrahi, the art of A. D. Thomas, Masoji and Wesley and others have made the Christian community conscious of what can be achieved. It must be recognized however that we cannot apply standards of utility to real forms of art. Art must be evolved not merely produced so that we cannot force the pace in this sphere. There is great need however for a general understanding in the Christian community of the value of art and music and the characteristics of Indian art and architecture. It is only from such an understanding that Christian art can rise from the Indian background. Christian people as a whole need to learn discrimination in their appreciation of art and to be more ready to encourage Christian artists.

We note with some satisfaction the increasing interest and appreciation that Christians in India have begun to show in the graphic arts and to the not negligible sensitiveness they have shown to the classical and folk music of India in some parts by adapting it for Church services. Their attitude to other art forms particularly classical Indian dances is yet not free from lingering prejudices; hence the absence of any adequate appreciation of them. Christians also have shown an indifference to innovation and experiments in Church architecture, though we think the time has come that such experiments especially those involving adaptation of Indian or other forms might well be undertaken.

Conclusion

By cultural origin, the Christian community in India can claim affinity with the two main streams of national heritage—Hindu and Muslim. We have also had the additional advantage of being exposed more to the impact of Western culture than others. We are in a way peculiarly fitted to help interpret and integrate the various strains in our composite culture.

The Gospel which has brought us into being as a people is the Gospel we are commissioned to proclaim. The same Gospel also provides the fundamental categories whereby all cultural foundations are to be subjected constantly to criticism. Integral to our task of

evangelism is therefore the assessment of all values, both those that we have traditionally inherited and those that are emerging from the present age of technology. Our generation of Christians in India must reckon with the obligation to foster such values as will contribute to the healthy growth and future of the national culture.

Appendix

Suggestions for encouraging interest in creative arts in which Churches as such, Christian institutions and other lay organisations can participate: (*a*) Cultural Weeks, (*b*) Study Seminars, (*c*) Youth Festivals, (*d*) Scholarships in Art, Music and Literature, (*e*) The Institution of a Christian School of Art and Indian Music, (*f*) Prizes for the production of literature in the national languages.

BOOK REVIEWS

A Study of Nehru. Edited by Rafiq Zakariah. (A Times of India Publication, Second Revised Edition. January, 1960. Pp. 478 and pictures).

This is a symposium of essays on Nehru issued on the occasion of his 70th birthday. It ontains more than 60 contributions covering various aspects of the personality of one who has made his indelible mark on history. Besides a short biography and some intimate glimpses it includes also a pictorial survey of the life of Nehru. Some of the essays are by admirers and statesmen of other countries. They are however more than mere felicitations. But what gives value to the book is the collection of essays which seek a critical evaluation of some of Nehru's domestic and foreign policies. In these essays, the writers are highly appreciative of the man, but they also show the limitations of some of his policies. Indeed, the criticisms from the right and from the left cancel each other. But these criticisms reveal the points at which Indian politics may in due course outgrow Nehru's policies and the ideas underlying them. Communists, no doubt, hope that when Indian politics loses Nehru's leadership or finds it inadequate they will provide the alternative leadership. If this hope ever comes true, it will be India's betrayal of Nehru, for despite whatever weaknesses he may have, he remains essentially a democrat committed to a genuine humanism.

In the light of the nation-wide debate that is going on round certain of his domestic and foreign policies at the present moment, the criticisms of Nehru from the side of democratic socialism and democratic conservatism are revealing. They show clearly certain blind spots in Nehru's basic political thinking, which have led him to radical miscalculations and mistakes. Some of them are worthy of note here: *Firstly*, Nehru's softness towards Communists. Asoka Mehta calls Nehru "Asia's outstanding democrat" and gives him credit for giving India "the anchorage for stabilising democracy in India". But, Nehru's thinking has been reluctant to recognise "the fundamentally anti-democratic character of the Communists"; he prefers to view what is integral to Communism as "an aberration". Result: "An indulgent attitude towards the communists is deemed to be a mark of the progressive, of being loyal to the legacy of Nehru. It is conveniently forgotten that today within the fold of socialism the world over the *a' outrance* fight is between the Communists and the democrats." *Secondly*, Nehru's socialism. A. D. Shroff and Homi Modi are exaggerating when they speak of Nehru's continued commitment to the socialism which he preached in 1936. His socialism has become more pragmatic as years have gone by. India's planning has been characterised as "planning without dogma" (V. K. R. V. Rao). But it may be true that Nehru's socialism still retains a large measure of doctrinaire ideology inherited from the past. *Thirdly*, Nehru's Neutralism. Charles Malik has an essay on the *Limitations of Neutrality*. Some of the limitations he refers to, Indian policy on international affairs have recognised from the very beginning, *e.g.*, the distinction between military neutrality and political neutrality. Here again therefore the criticism is exaggerated. But one cannot but admit that the dogmatism with which Nehru has pursued non-alignment and co-existence has led many even in India to confuse military neutrality with political neutrality. It has also led India to think that world peace is solely a matter of moral principles and to forget that national self-interest is a real factor, sometimes even determinative, in any foreign policy.

I have picked up these criticisms because I consider that Nehru's thinking is weak at these three points. But it must be added that it is a weakness which the democratic intelligentsia of India shares with Nehru. Asoka Mehta is right in saying that Nehru has been "too deeply influenced by the experiences and understanding he encountered in the twenties and thirties". But this is true not only of Nehru, but also of the rest of the intelligentsia in India (and elsewhere) who shared those "experiences and understanding". But experiences of the post-war era and the compelling necessity of a new view of things and men are helping Nehru and India to correct their perspective. Nehru has shown capacity for learning the new lessons remarkably well. It is harder however to remould fundamental thinking itself to suit these lessons. This must be the task of a post-Nehru generation. It is a bit too much to expect Nehru himself to lead this new generation.

The tragedy of much of the present opposition to Nehru however is that it is very much pre-Nehru in leadership and thought-patterns, *e.g.*, Swatantra Party. Where do we look for the new generation who will not simply negate but transcend Nehru? In a sense this is also the tragedy of Nehru. As the editor of the book under review, in his biographical sketch, concludes: "The tragedy of his leadership is that, unlike Gandhiji, he has not produced the leaders—young, active and dynamic—who can take on his mantle. And worse still, he seems least concerned about it. Nevertheless, India prays that after him it may be spared the deluge."

Nehru's attitude to religion is rather complex. Sampurnanand quotes from one of Nehru's articles to show that he has kept his link with the Vedantic view of reality. Once Nehru wrote: "In considering these economic aspects of our problems, we have always to remember the basic approach of peaceful means; and perhaps we might also keep in view the old Vedantic ideal of the life force which is the inner base of everything that exists." There is no doubt that Gandhi's approach to reality has had a tremendous influence on Nehru's spirit and mind. It has made him appreciate the ethical basis of life more than ever before; and it has kept him open to the creative influence of certain indigenous religious traditions in society. On the whole, however, he has no use for religion. His faith is best defined as a sort of Secular Humanism. K. G. Saiyidain has quoted Nehru as affirming his faith in Man thus: "I see man's repeated martyrdom and crucifixion, but I see also the spirit of man rising again and again and triumphing over evil." Note the imagery of the crucifiction and the resurrection. No faith whether theistic, atheistic, or neo-pagan in a culture informed by the Christian idea of purposive history, can do away with the Christian structure and forms of thought. The creed and the imagery used may be taken as indicating how deeply rooted Nehru is in the secularised culture of the West. Here again, Nehru's inability to secure a profounder interpretation of ultimate reality is a tragedy which he shares with the intelligentsia of the modern West which reared him in his formative years. Nehru's Secular Humanism has been a support to Indian democracy; but it can be no more than a tentative halting place in New India's quest for a more enduring religious and cultural foundation. In this too, India is seeking a post-Nehru Humanism which surpasses Nehru.

M. M. T.

Saving the Appearances—A Study in Idolatry. By Owen Barfield. (Faber and Faber, London). 1957. Pp. 190.

This is an uncommon book covering a vast field ranging from primitive mentality and pre-history to Jung's collective unconscious; it deals indeed with the meaning of modern science from a deep theological angle.

If I had to put in my own and yet traditional words what this book is all about I would say something like this: Not only man but the whole cosmos as well came out of God and return back to Him, for both form a unity. This return is the history of the universe; it is not just a reversion to the starting-point but a real process, a true history and even a progress. This history has a double dimension and the author complains rightly that the history of the evolution of the universe has been lopsided in the sense that the description of the evolution of nature has not been complemented by a history of the evolution of human consciousness, which latter is inseparable from the former.

The above is his main point; in other words, he lays emphasis on the ambivalent meaning of science. On the one hand, it is pure idolatry for it objectivizes the collective representations of a certain cultural epoch and forgets that they are only meaningful in correlation with a particular stage of human consciousness. On the other hand, the scientific revolution has enabled man to emerge from the undifferentiated stage of "original participation" and prepares him for "final participation"; that is to say, from being an amorphous and unconscious unity with the world to discovering and realizing this same unity on the plane of the spirit and of consciousness.

The author's outlook on modern science is illuminating, his style is brilliant and the book full of important remarks for the understanding of our present cultural situation. I would say that the plain and brilliant language of the book increases our difficulty in understanding what the author wants to tell us. A certain abhorrence of dry "philosophy" is very sound but if, after all, he is philosophizing he cannot ignore those who have philosophized on the same problems before him. In spite of his originality in stating the problem—which may be very useful for those who are infected by "Scientism"—he is advocating again what many a philosopher and even Schools of Philosophy have advocated before him.

These remarks should not belittle the value of this work which should be carefully studied and which should make an impact on our understanding of the most important cultural event of our times, the scientific revolution.

R. PANIKKER, *Banaras*.

Appendix :

NASRAPUR, JANUARY 1960

NEW PATTERNS OF SOCIAL WITNESS OF THE CHURCH IN INDIA

UNDER the joint auspices of the National Council of India and the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, a Christian Conference was held at the Spiritual Life Centre, Nasrapur (Near Poona) from January 2 to 7, 1960. It was meant to conclude the Bombay Follow-up Study on social questions, which has been going on since it was inaugurated by the Bombay Conference in 1956. The purpose of the concluding Conference was:

"(1) to review the Summing up Volume, a first draft of which was sent to the participants;

(2) to discuss the implications of the study for the life and witness of the Churches in India;

(3) more especially to consider the nature and forms of Christian participation in India's national development; and

(4) to evaluate old forms of service and formulate new ones in this light."

Organisation.—Dr. P. D. Devanandan, Rt. Rev. G. Sundaram, Rt. Rev. Philipose Mar Chrysostum and Smy. Olive Yohan Masih were the Co-Chairmen of the Conference and guided its deliberations. Rev. Murray Rogers was Chaplain and organised the worship periods. The Rev. and Mrs. John Crozier were hosts of the Conference and gladly took the responsibility of all practical and organisational managements.

Programme.—During the first part, several papers were presented and discussed in the plenary sessions. Rev. J. R. Chandran and Mr. Ranjit M. Chetsingh dealt with the theme: *Discerning Christ in India's Nation-Building*; Mr. S. P. Appasamy and the Rev. Murray Rogers on: *In the World to Transform It*; Miss E. Anchees and Mr. J. G. Arapura on: *New Patterns of Service.* In the second part four Commissions worked on four different topics: (1) *Christian Participation in Political Life* (*Chairman*: Rt. Rev. Philipose Mar Chrysostum;

Secretary: Dr. Frank Thakur Das). (2) *Christian Participation in Economic Development* (*Chairman*: Rev. A. J. Shaw; *Secretary*: Mr. A. J. Borde). (3) *Christian Participation in the Reorganisation of Social Structures* (*Chairman*: Smy. Olive Yohan Masih; *Secretary*: Mr. D. A. Thangasamy). (4) *Christian Participation in Developing the Cultural Foundation for New India* (*Chairman*: Dr. P. D. Devanandan; *Secretary*: Mr. J. G. Arapura). Their reports were later discussed in the plenary, redrafted and adopted by the Conference. The Findings are published elsewhere in this Bulletin.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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